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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1059

9 January 2015

U.S. Imperialists Open Diplomatic Relations

Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!

Reuters / Corbis

Health care and education are free to all Cubans, despite decades-long U.S. embargo. Havana school (above), 2012, and hospital (right), 2007.

For over half a century, the U.S. imperialists have worked relentlessly to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and restore the rule of capital on the island: from the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion to repeated attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro, from terrorist provocations by the CIA and Cuban exile *gusanos* to acts of sabotage. Now the Obama White House has announced that it wants to "chart a new course" with Cuba by restoring diplomatic relations, that is, pursue what it considers a more effective means to achieve the same strategic goal. It was after the Castro government expropriated the capitalist class on the island in 1960, bringing enormous gains for the Cuban masses, that Washington cut off relations with Havana.

What is proposed is relatively modest: relaxing various travel restrictions, authorizing some commercial sales and exports and facilitating banking transactions between the two countries. The crippling U.S. embargo, an act of economic warfare that has been strangling the Cuban workers and peasants for decades, is loosened but not dismantled. Obama claims that without approval from Congress he cannot overturn the Torricelli and Helms-Burton acts. These acts tightened the embargo following the 1991-92 collapse of the Soviet Union, which put an end to crucial economic and military aid for Cuba. Signed under the Democrat Clinton, they were intended to "wreak havoc on the island." ***Down with the embargo!***

From the standpoint of revolutionary Marxists, Cuba has the right to enter into diplomatic and economic relations with any capitalist country it chooses, not least as a means to attempt to overcome the very real problem of its economic stagnation. Increased commercial and financial ties to U.S. corporations would not amount to the creeping restoration of capitalism. However, they bring the very real danger of strengthening the internal forces for capitalist counterrevolution on the island.

Meanwhile, the presence of the U.S. naval base and detention-torture center at Guantánamo Bay—where around 130 prisoners of the U.S. "war on terror" are held—is a reminder that Cuba is still in the imperialists' military crosshairs. Despite the release of dozens of prisoners last year, Obama is not about to shut down this dungeon, much less return Guantánamo to Cuba. ***U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay now!***

The thaw in relations between the two countries came after over a year of negotiations, hosted by the Canadian government and pushed by the Vatican. Like prior CEOs of U.S. imperialism, Obama has openly revanchist goals for Cuba. Under Obama's watch, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—notorious for working alongside the CIA since the early 1960s—has hatched several counterrevolutionary schemes to sow pro-imperialist dissent on the island. One recent plot involved infiltrating Cuba's underground hip-hop groups in an attempt to spark a youth movement against the regime.

As part of the recent agreement, Obama released the three members of the Cuban Five who remained in custody after their conviction in 2001 on bogus charges of espionage and murder conspiracy. Freedom for the Cuban Five, men who heroically attempted to prevent terrorist acts against Cuba by infiltrating and monitoring counterrevolutionary exile groups in Florida, should be celebrated. In exchange, Cuban president Raúl Castro gave up two American spies: former Cuban intelligence officer Rolando Sarraff Trujillo—who facilitated the frame-up arrest of the Cuban Five—and USAID contractor Alan Gross, who was dispatched to smuggle spy-grade computer and satellite communications gear into Cuba.

The International Communist League has always fought for the unconditional military defense of Cuba against the threat of capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack. This flows from our understanding that Cuba is a workers state in which capitalism has been overthrown. Yet it has been bureaucratically deformed from its inception, i.e., political power is monopolized by a parasitic ruling bureaucracy. The material basis for this bureaucracy is the administration of the collectivized economy under conditions of scarcity.

The elimination of production for profit, together with the establishment of centralized planning and the state monopoly of foreign trade and investment, allowed Cuba to provide jobs, housing and education for everyone. To this day, Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and a lower infant mortality rate than the U.S. or the European Union. Its renowned health care system, with more doctors per capita than anywhere else, provides free medical care of higher quality than even many advanced countries. Cuban doctors have saved lives worldwide and are regularly dispatched to help the victims of disasters, including the Ebola crisis in Africa. It is a testament to the superiority

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For Workers Political Revolution in Cuba!

Franco/NY Times

Camp Delta at the U.S. Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, notorious for torture of "enemy combatants." U.S. military base is dagger aimed at deformed workers state.

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"The Strikebreakers Go on Strike... Police Militancy vs. Labor"

The article excerpted below explains the reactionary and anti-labor nature of the 1971 New York City patrolmen's strike and of the police themselves. The article is reprinted from Workers' Action *(No. 8, April-May 1971), precursor of* Workers Vanguard.

* * *

On the night shift of January 14, New York City patrolmen left their beats to begin a six-day work stoppage, the first such action by the police in the history of the city. The action, unauthorized by the leadership of the PBA [Patrolmen's Benevolent Association], was precipitated by a court ruling effectively barring payment of $2700 in retroactive pay claimed by the PBA as part of a parity arrangement based on a 3 to 3.5 pay ratio of patrolmen to police officers. During the course of the action Police Commissioner Murphy backed up by Mayor Lindsay threatened to call in National Guard to maintain "law and order." Following their return to work, a subsequent ruling in favor of the PBA claim resulted in a total $3300 payment in retroactive salaries, bringing the base pay of the cops up to a whopping $12,150 per year.

The police action has resurrected some serious questions for trade union militants and, significantly, has smoked out some extremely dangerous attitudes within the trade union movement and even among a couple of ostensibly left organizations, regarding the relationship of labor militants to the police action and police in general. What was the real nature of the New York police action? What are "militant policemen"? Are police a part of the working class? How do we define class divisions in society? What are the main features of a capitalist state? Should labor have supported the police action? Is [the PBA] a "union"? The answers to these questions have assumed critical importance because of the recent intensification of struggles by public employees at all levels. In this situation an incorrect understanding of the police and their social role can have immediate disastrous consequences for the trade union movement. It also calls seriously into question the credibility of any political organization claiming to support workers' struggles that could be so wrong on such a basic question, one going to the very heart of the life and death struggle between Labor and Capital.[...]

Boenzi/NY Times

WV Photo

Top: NYC cop strike, January 1971. Bottom: NYPD officers attempt to break up hospital workers' demonstration against budget cuts, July 1975.

STRIKE WAVE INTENSIFIES

It has been a long time in this country since we have seen large scale clashes between organized labor and capital such as the strike wave that has been building force over the last four years. During the 1950's, following the strike waves after World War II, whole layers of rank and file leaders and militants were purged from the unions along with the "reds," in the name of patriotism and anti-communism and as a result there was a sharp break in the continuity of tradition and class consciousness in the working class movement. Under these conditions, and during long periods with very little strike activity the real social role of the police sometimes becomes obscured. Add to this, temporary antagonisms between various strata of the population—white vs. black, workers vs. students, one ethnic group against another or any combination of these—and you have a fairly widespread (and often racist) attitude among many workers that the police are their "friends." A couple of violent strikes tends to sort this out, but in the meantime many workers are content to see the cops get the other "real troublemakers." For instance, the unity between patriotic New York construction workers and the police against "long-haired" anti-war students witnessed last spring will come to an end when the same construction workers go on strike to protect their wages from [U.S. president Richard] Nixon's attack and their "friends" the police come along to beat their heads and break their strike.[...]

The police work stoppage was fundamentally an *anti-labor* action. It was a *political* strike by a police force that has become dangerously conscious of its social role as the armed defenders of the social system of hig business and the "law and order" that protects and maintains the power and privilege of this ruling class. It reflects the general motion of the working class only in a *negative* sense, for the motion of the police is the symmetrical, polar opposite of that in the working class and in fact more resembles the recent re-emergence of fascist organizations attacking striking workers in France and Italy, or vigilante bands of police terrorists in Guatemala and other Latin American countries that have been assassinating labor leaders and members of revolutionary workers groups. The New York police are sick and tired of "having one arm tied behind their back" in dealing with militant blacks and Puerto Ricans, anti-war activists, trade union militants, and [Mayor John] Lindsay himself, whom they regard as some kind of "communist." In short, they and their "employers" are anticipating and preparing for a *counter attack* against organized labor.[...]

THE PBA'S PAST

The New York cops began to organize in 1963 when the PBA went over from heing a paper organization to the "hargaining agent" for all city cops with parallel organizations among transit cops and others. The PBA is not a union—it is basically a right-wing paramilitary political organization with a number of reported overlaps in the John Birch Society and Minutemen-type organizations, with an annual income of $10 million a year from dues and pension contributions. In the last years of the Wagner administration the cops were given an "open season" on blacks and Puerto Ricans. The phony "Blood Brothers" panic, the 1964 Harlem police riots, the series of "accidental" killings by the cops in 1964-65 (paralleling the current rash of "suicides" in City jails) were all a part of this. During this period the cops acquired a new consciousness as the City's armed enforcers of racism—and they liked it! When Lindsay became mayor in 1966 and broke up the old police hierarchy, known as the "Irish mafia," that controlled the Police Department and later attempted to set up a token Civilian Review Board to play "soft cop" the police organized politically, joining forces with the Conservative Party, the John Birch Society and an assortment of racist and right-wing groups and *defeated* that timid proposal. Was that picket line of 10,000 armed, off-duty police around City Hall chanting "Lindsay is a commie" and "No Civilian Review Board" a "militant action" also? The same John J. Cassese that was a key figure in organizing the New York PBA (until he left under the cloud of an alleged embezzling scandal in 1969) is now attempting to form a ***national*** organization of police called the Brotherhood of Police Officers (BPO), a move we regard as extremely dangerous, posing the spectre of a centrally directed political organization. Is that a "union" that these champions of police "militancy" would have the trade unions support when it tries a national strike to protest the refusal of the AFL-CIO to charter it? (The BPO's first attempt at such a charter was recently scuttled by [AFSCME union head] Jerry Wurf who regarded it simply as an attempted "raid" on AFSCME's cop members.)

EVEN GEORGE MEANY...

Are cops then workers and a part of the labor movement? Even [AFL-CIO president] George Meany said "no" to that some years back when the New York PBA first applied for AFL-CIO recognition. Since then he's moved so far right he sees eye to eye with the cops on most questions. But he has a lot of company these days, and some pretty strange bedfellows at that. Well, how *do* we figure out who are workers and who aren't? In a class society like ours the main social divisions are based upon the difference in the relationship of persons to the process of production. The way in which people enter into economic relations with each other for the purpose of production decide the social relations between them, that is, decides which *class* each person belongs to and the ensuing class relations. This division gives us one class, the capitalists, composed of those who own all the means of production and exchange—factories,

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Dimwit Film Fans the Flames

U.S. Provocations Target North Korea

Juvenile, witless, downright dumb, *The Interview* might be dismissed as just another piece of Hollywood trash destined to forever clog up cable channels. What cannot be dismissed is the U.S. rulers' sinister use of the movie to further demonize and threaten North Korea, the target of imperialist war, relentless military pressure and starvation economic sanctions.

Everyone knows the plot of the movie, which was produced by Japanese-owned Sony: a CIA plan to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, last seen onscreen with his head exploding. Less widely known is Washington's role in goosing the film along. A rough cut was vetted by State Department personnel; one of the film's consultants was Bruce Bennett, a senior analyst at the RAND Corporation, a military think tank, who is known for his view that the way to bring down the Pyongyang regime is to assassinate its leadership.

In June, Pyongyang vigorously protested the planned film, as would any government whose leader was shown being blown away. But for U.S. imperialism, North Korea is not just any country. As with China, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos today, it is one of those parts of the planet where social revolution overturned capitalist property relations and won liberation from imperialist bondage—an outcome that the capitalist powers are intent on reversing by any means necessary.

The Obama administration seized on a November cyberattack against Sony to accuse the Kim regime of trying to prevent *The Interview* from being seen, concocting a phony "free speech" issue when Sony initially decided to pull the film from distribution. The White House leveled its charge despite the fact that the group that took responsibility for hacking Sony, Guardians of Peace, made no mention of the film when it e-mailed company executives on November 21 demanding monetary compensation. Only after Western media began linking the cyberattack to the film did the hackers denounce it as a "movie of terrorism." Particularly embarrassing to Sony executives was the hackers' release of e-mails containing racially loaded comments about Obama, insults of various movie stars and other dirt.

On December 19, Obama pronounced North Korea guilty for the cyberattack just hours after the FBI publicly presented its case against Pyongyang, which has denied any involvement. Numerous Internet security experts have expressed skepticism about the FBI's purported evidence, calling it extremely improbable. But this is of little concern to the crazed rulers of U.S. imperialism, who have long cast the North Korean bureaucratically deformed workers state as an international outlaw and pariah. The North Korean government answered Obama's charges by offering to conduct a joint investigation with the U.S., stating that it could prove its innocence "without resorting to torture, as what the C.I.A. does." The White House dismissed the offer outright.

Following up his accusation, Obama directed the military's Cyber Command, led by the head of the NSA, to develop "a range of offensive options" to go after North Korea. Three days after his public accusation, North Korea's woefully tenuous Internet connections went down, as they did again a day or so later. The White House has also threatened to put the country back on the list of those supposedly sponsoring terrorism—a recipe for more imperialist skullduggery. Adding to the squeeze on a society already suffering what may well be the world's heaviest economic sanctions, the Obama administration on January 2 announced further sanctions against high-ranking individuals and government agencies in North Korea.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea and all the remaining deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. The overturn of capitalist rule in North Korea, carried out with the military backing of the Soviet Army following Japan's defeat in World War II, was a historic victory for the Korean masses and for the workers of the world. Our military defense of North Korea is a defense of the expropriation of capitalism, a necessary part of our program for international proletarian revolution. It does not entail the least political support for the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy, a deeply nationalist, weirdly nepotistic and brutally repressive regime.

The bourgeois media has made much of the North Korean government's vile racist slur against Obama over *The Interview* affair. Calling the black president a "monkey" was a glaring demonstration of the Pyongyang Stalinists' perversely retrograde worldview. Committed to "socialism" only in its half of the Korean Peninsula, the Kim regime disdains the class struggles of the international proletariat and calls for "peaceful reunification" of Korea, a setup for reunification on a capitalist basis. It is the task of the North Korean workers to oust the bureaucratic regime and create a government of workers and peasants councils committed to proletarian internationalism and a program for the revolutionary reunification of Korea: for proletarian political revolution in the North and socialist revolution in the South.

The opening scene of *The Interview* features a North Korean girl singing at an official event, a ballistic missile test-launch supposedly demonstrating the country's ability to nuke the western U.S. She sings about wanting "the United States to explode in a ball of fiery hell" and for Americans to "be forced to starve and beg, and be ravaged by disease.... May they drown in their own blood and feces." There is great, unintended irony in this scene, which describes to a tee the death, destruction and threat of nuclear annihilation meted out by U.S. imperialism during the 1950-53 Korean War. Under the aegis of its tool, the United Nations, the U.S. military invaded the Korean Peninsula in the summer of 1950, after North Korean armed forces entered the South and unleashed a powerful social revolution that came within a hair's breadth of liberating the area from the imperialists and their puppets.

American professor Bruce Cumings recounts in *The Korean War: A History* (Modern Library, 2010):

> "We carpet-bombed the North for three years with next to no concern for civilian casualties.... The air assaults ranged from the widespread and continual use of firebombing to threats to use nuclear and chemical weapons, finally to the destruction of huge North Korean dams in the last stages of the war."

Cumings notes that "oceans" of napalm were dropped on Korea, with even more devastating effect than in Vietnam, which was less urbanized than Korea. In the words of Curtis LeMay, commander of the air attacks: "We burned down *every* town in North Korea and South Korea, too."

National Archives

Seoul, 1950. U.S. imperialists slaughtered some three million people in Korean War, reduced peninsula to rubble.

Some three million Koreans and Chinese troops were slaughtered in the effort by the U.S., aided by its local henchmen, to smash social revolution, with entire villages wiped out because their residents were suspected of being sympathetic to the Communists. It was the entry of China's People's Liberation Army that turned the tide in the war, throwing back imperialist forces that had nearly overrun the North and were threatening the Chinese mainland. That nukes were not used against North Korea or China was due mainly to the Soviet Union's possession of these weapons. Today, possessing nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems is necessary to the defense of North Korea as well as China, providing a crucial deterrent factor against imperialist attack.

The 1953 armistice hardened the division between the North Korean deformed workers state and the capitalist South. To this day, the U.S. keeps nearly 30,000 troops in South Korea. We demand: All U.S. troops and bases out of South Korea! Drop all sanctions against North Korea!

In the two decades after the Korean War, North Korea's collectivized economy, aided by the Soviet Union, brought modern industry, infrastructure and relative prosperity. However, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92 cut off the North from its main economic partners while the imperialists maintained their embargo. Despite Chinese trade and aid since that time, North Korea has been plagued by widespread malnutrition, lack of access to resources and industrial decay.

Constantly menaced by the U.S. and its South Korean underlings, North Korea faces a further threat from the ramped-up U.S.-Japan military alliance, which principally targets China. For their part, the Beijing Stalinists have undermined the defense of both the Chinese and North Korean workers states by accommodating imperialist demands on Pyongyang to give up its nuclear deterrent, voting repeatedly in the UN for sanctions against North Korea. The UN is now increasing the pressure by debating whether North Korea's leaders should be tried for "human rights" violations. The CIA torture exposed in the U.S. Senate's highly expurgated report will surely not be cause for a punitive UN sanction.

We'll say one thing for *The Interview*. In its own pitiful way, this offering from Tinseltown, on track to be a giant moneymaker for Sony, gives a measure of the utter decay of culture and education in the citadel of world imperialism. In calling on the working class in the U.S., Japan and internationally to oppose imperialist machinations against North Korea, we are driven by the need to build the multiracial workers party that can lead the struggle to smash capitalist imperialism from within, through socialist revolution. ■

29th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Free the Class-War Prisoners!
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OAKLAND

Saturday, January 17
1 to 4 p.m.

303 Hudson St., lower level
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Information: (510) 839-0852

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Saturday, January 24
3 to 6 p.m.

131 E. 10th St., Manhattan
(St. Mark's Church in the Bowery, Parish Hall, entrance on 11th St. near 2nd Ave.)
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(Labor Defender, Dec. 1927)

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Delphine Fawandu

—U.S. Black Militant in Exile in Cuba—

Hands Off Assata Shakur!

Barack Obama's decision to open diplomatic relations with Havana has New Jersey governor Chris Christie howling for the head of Assata Shakur (formerly known as Joanne Chesimard). The victim of a racist frame-up for the 1973 death of a New Jersey state trooper, Shakur escaped prison and fled to Cuba, where she has lived for 30 years since Fidel Castro granted her political asylum. The former Black Panther Party member wrote in a 1998 open letter: "I am a 20th century escaped slave. Because of government persecution, I was left with no other choice than to flee from the political repression, racism and violence that dominate the US government's policy towards people of color."

Christie, who has his own presidential aspirations, sent a letter to the White House demanding Shakur's extradition to the U.S. so that she might rot away in one of New Jersey's dungeons. Cuba, though, has no intention of returning her, with its head of North American affairs stating in an interview: "Every nation has the sovereign and legitimate rights to grant political asylum to people it considers to have been persecuted." In response, the New Jersey governor ranted that the Cubans are "thugs" and Shakur's asylum is "unacceptable."

The crusade to bring Shakur to "justice" casts a sharp light on how the U.S. bourgeoisie's decades-long vendetta against black militants of the 1960s and '70s intersects its unflagging determination to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. Dozens of radical black activists and Puerto Rican nationalists have been welcomed with open arms by the Cuban deformed workers state, infuriating the U.S. imperialists. A case in point was Robert F. Williams, who as head of the NAACP branch in Monroe, North Carolina, was hounded by the FBI for advocating armed self-defense against race-terror.

In their drive to restore capitalism to the island, the U.S. rulers have trained and later granted asylum to a host of counterrevolutionary scum, foremost among them Luis Posada Carriles, who had a hand in everything from the Bay of Pigs invasion to the dirty war by CIA-backed "contras" against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Wanted in Cuba for engineering the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airliner that killed 73 people as well as for a 1997 hotel bombing in that country, Posada freely roams the streets of Miami today with his reactionary *gusano* cohorts.

Christie is far from alone in pursuing the racist political witchhunt of Shakur. In fact, two years ago the administration of the first black president declared 65-year-old Shakur one of the world's most wanted "terrorists" and doubled the bounty on her to $2 million. In the article "FBI's Racist 'Anti-Terror' Vendetta Against Assata Shakur" (*WV* No. 1024, 17 May 2013), we explained that these steps had "a dual purpose: to settle the score against those who fought for black freedom over 40 years ago and to warn that radical activity would be treated as 'domestic terrorism'."

Shakur's case shows what American justice is all about. In May 1973, Shakur and two other former Black Panthers, Zayd Malik Shakur and Sundiata Acoli—then members of the Black Liberation Army—were stopped by two troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike, supposedly for a "faulty taillight." One of the troopers shot and killed Zayd Shakur, while the other trooper was shot in the crossfire with a bullet from a police revolver. Assata was shot twice, once in the back while her hands were up in the air. Gunpowder residue testing proved she had not fired a gun, but she was locked up in a maximum-security prison after an all-white jury convicted her on charges of killing the trooper—and her companion.

For the American rulers who want her dead or behind bars, Shakur's real crime is her continued defiance of this racist capitalist system. The FBI's J. Edgar Hoover vowed in 1968: "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries." We Marxists, who fight for black liberation through workers socialist revolution, vigorously defended the Panthers and others against the capitalist state's murderous repression, despite our programmatic differences with black nationalism. ***Hands off Assata Shakur!*** ■

Cuba...

(continued from page 1)

of a collectivized economy that a tiny, relatively impoverished island has survived this long under crippling sanctions and military provocations by the U.S. behemoth just 90 miles from its shore.

In his December 20 speech to the Cuban National Assembly announcing the U.S.-Cuba rapprochement, Raúl Castro warned against resorting to "shock therapies" or speeding up privatization to revive that country's stagnant economy, which he said would equate to "laying down the flags of socialism." But socialism is a classless, egalitarian society of material abundance on an international scale. An isolated workers state is subject to enormous pressures from the surrounding capitalist world, pressures that undermine and will eventually destroy it. Cuba's fate and its advance towards socialism are bound up with the struggle for proletarian power throughout Latin America and the rest of the world, especially in the U.S.

The politics of the Castroite bureaucracy in Havana have from the beginning proved an obstacle to this perspective. The Cuban regime, following in the footsteps of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union, is wedded to the nationalist dogma of building "socialism in one country." This has meant ***opposing*** the possibilities for revolution outside the island. In the early 1970s, Fidel Castro embraced Chile's popular-front government headed by Salvador Allende, whose purpose was to head off the threat of workers revolution and politically disarm the militant proletariat, paving the way for Pinochet's bloody military coup. A decade later, after the petty-bourgeois Nicaraguan Sandinistas had overthrown the oppressive Somoza dictatorship, shattering the capitalist state, Fidel admonished them not to follow the Cuban road by expropriating the bourgeoisie. The Castroites have always promoted bourgeois-nationalist regimes, including their glorification of the late Venezuelan populist strongman Hugo Chávez as a supposed revolutionary.

Thus, defense of the Cuban revolution is directly linked to the Trotskyist call for ***proletarian political revolution*** to oust the Castro bureaucracy and to place the working class in power, establishing a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. This requires the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to mobilize the Cuban working masses in struggle.

Reuters

The Cuban Five celebrate their freedom at concert in Havana, December 20.

Imperialist Depredations and "Market Reforms"

The relaxing of restrictions on Cuba predictably provoked ire from the snake pit of anti-Communist Cuban exiles and their creatures, like Florida senator Marco Rubio. But it is being celebrated by a large sector of the bourgeoisie, including the bosses' Chamber of Commerce, and capitalist media mouthpieces. In recent months, the *New York Times* has repeatedly called for lifting the embargo. Viewing belligerent U.S. policy as counterproductive and outdated, an opinion piece in *Forbes* (16 January 2013) noted: "A perpetual embargo on a developing nation that is moving towards reform makes little sense, especially when America's allies are openly hostile to the embargo. It keeps a broader discussion about smart reform in Cuba from gaining life, and it makes no economic sense."

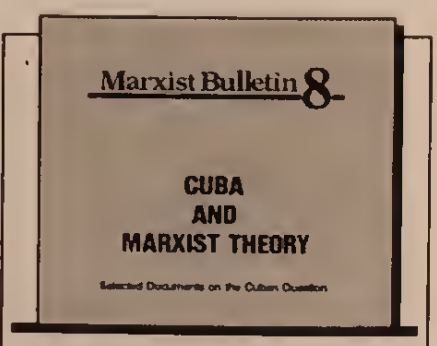
The Obama administration proclaims its desire for "a democratic, prosperous and stable" Cuba, by which it means returning Cuba to its neocolonial status through the restoration of capitalism, bringing profitable investment for the U.S. rulers based on low-wage labor, and installing a docile political regime. European and Canadian capitalists have been able to move into the Cuban market through joint ventures and aim to flood the country with cheap imports. Several Fortune 500 corporations, including Caterpillar, Colgate-Palmolive and Pepsico, fear ceding the market to competitors.

The stakes are high: ultimately either the only socialized economy in Latin America will prevail through the extension of the revolution internationally, or capitalist counterrevolution will convert Cuba back to the U.S. bourgeoisie's playground. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), revolutionary Marxist leader Leon Trotsky described the situation confronting the Soviet degenerated workers state, that is, its encirclement by more technologically and industrially advanced capitalist economies. Trotsky wrote: "The question, Who shall prevail—not only as a military, but still more as an economic question—confronts the Soviet Union on a world scale. Military intervention is a danger. The intervention of cheap commodities in the baggage trains of capitalist armies would be incomparably more dangerous." Such an observation is relevant to the perils Cuba faces today.

For 30 years, Cuba benefited from heavy Soviet subsidies. In the last decade, it has heavily relied on capitalist Venezuela as its main trading partner, which has supplied Cuba with cheap oil. But this situation is precarious, with Venezuela itself suffering a grave crisis amid the collapse of world oil prices, racked by inflation and recently hit with additional vindictive U.S. sanctions.

Cuba has never fully recovered from the severe crisis that followed the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. Since the early '90s, dubbed the "Special Period," the Cuban bureaucracy has opened the country to imperialist economic penetration, turning over sectors of the collectivized economy to small-scale private enterprise through "market reforms." This and other policies, like encouraging self-employment in the service sector and granting wider autonomy for state-owned companies, have increased inequality on the island. Cuban blacks, who saw tremendous gains from the revolution, have been hit particularly hard, as they are less likely to have access to hard currency, either through remittances from abroad or by filling jobs in the tourist sector.

Cuba today has substantial imperialist investment and is angling for more. Thirty miles from Havana in the deepwater Port of Mariel, the Cuban government is allowing the construction of a special "free trade" economic zone, intended to accommodate the world's largest cargo



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Cuba and Marxist Theory
Selected Documents, 1960-1966

The fight of the Revolutionary Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party and the development of the Spartacist League's characterization of Cuba as a deformed workers state. Includes preface from 1973.

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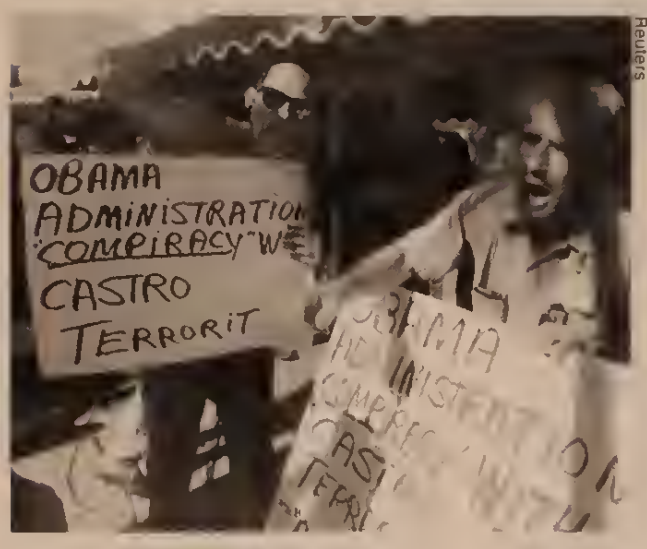
ships. Brazil has already poured nearly a billion dollars into the project. With the prospect of renewed trade with the U.S. now posed, we repeat our warning that such a development "underlines the importance of [Cuba's] state monopoly of foreign trade—i.e., strict government control of imports and exports" ("Cuba: Economic Crisis and 'Market Reforms'," *WV* No. 986, 16 September 2011).

The Cuban regime has reestablished ties with and promoted the reactionary Catholic church on the island, a potential breeding ground for capitalist counterrevolution. Pope Francis was applauded by both Obama and Castro for his role in the agreement. This Jesuit pope has offered the Vatican a bit of a face-lift by proposing to make the church more inclusive (while still staunchly opposing abortion and the ordination of women) and preaching against the "tyranny" of capitalism, but has no less sinister intentions than his predecessors.

The Vatican is notorious for propping up Latin American military dictatorships and for promoting capitalist restoration under the guise of supposed free elections and "democratic" reforms. Cuban Cardinal Jaime Ortega—confined to a detention camp in the early years of the revolution when the domination of the Catholic church was broken—is an outspoken promoter of such "reforms" on the island, as is Pope Francis. In 1998, Fidel enthusiastically welcomed Pope John Paul II, and in 2012 Pope Benedict XVI. Throughout the country, photos and monuments commemorate the meeting between Castro and John Paul, the patron of counterrevolution who worked tirelessly to restore capitalism in the East European deformed workers states, especially his native Poland.

Reuters

Havana: Raúl Castro with Pope Benedict, March 2012. Committed to "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist world, Cuban bureaucracy cultivates friendly relations with reactionary Catholic church.



Reuters

Miami: Counterrevolutionary *gusanos* denounce the opening of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba, December 17.

Defending Cuba at the Crossroads

The guerrilla forces that marched into Havana under Fidel Castro's leadership in 1959 were a politically heterogeneous petty-bourgeois formation. Their victory brought not only the downfall of the hated Batista regime but also shattered the old bourgeois state apparatus. The new government implemented a series of liberal reforms. But the land redistribution and measures taken against Batista's former police torturers scared Castro's own bourgeois supporters, who began to flee to Miami. These moves also alarmed Washington, which undertook punitive action, compelling Castro to sign a trade agreement with the Soviet Union. The refusal by imperialist-owned refineries to process Soviet crude oil provoked Cuba into nationalizing U.S.-owned properties, followed by the nationalization of all banks and businesses in October 1960, which liquidated the Cuban bourgeoisie as a class. Today, corporations including United Fruit, Standard Oil and Texaco are salivating over the prospect of extorting compensation for the nationalizations half a century ago.

The best that could come of the Cuban Revolution in the absence of the working class taking power under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party was the creation of a deformed workers state. Explaining how a peasant-based guerrilla movement was able to overturn capitalist rule, we wrote in the Spartacist League's 1966 *Declaration of Principles* adopted at our Founding Conference:

> "Movements of this sort can under certain conditions, i.e., the extreme disorganization of the capitalist class in the colonial country and the absence of the working class contending in its own right for social power, smash capitalist property relations; however, they cannot bring the working class to *political* power. Rather, they create bureaucratic anti-working-class regimes which suppress any further development of these revolutions towards socialism."
>
> —"Basic Documents of the Spartacist League," *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9

This revolution would not have survived without the Soviet Union providing a military counterweight to imperialism and an economic lifeline for the Cuban economy. Today, with no equivalent lifeline, the historical opening that allowed petty-bourgeois forces to create a deformed workers state has closed.

The fight to defend and extend the Cuban Revolution has been a hallmark of our tendency from its inception as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT), a minority inside the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP majority equated the Castro regime with the revolutionary Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky. In so doing, the SWP majority leaders explicitly rejected both the necessity of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to provide revolutionary leadership and the centrality of the proletariat in the fight for socialist revolution.

Having despaired of that perspective, the SWP enthused uncritically over the Castro bureaucracy. In January 1961, the SWP adopted Joseph Hansen's "Theses on the Cuban Revolution," which declared that Cuba had "entered the transitional phase of a workers state, although one lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule."

More than half a century later, our Trotskyist analysis and program has stood the test of time. Yesterday's cheerleaders for the Cuban bureaucracy have gotten older but not the least bit wiser. In a 23 December article posted on counterpunch.org, Jeff Mackler, chief honcho for Socialist Action (SA), an offshoot of the reformist SWP, channels Hansen's ghost, writing: "While Cuba still [!] lacks formal and vitally necessary institutions of workers democracy...the present Cuban leadership has not developed into a hardened caste whose interests can only be preserved by repression."

In fact, the bureaucratic caste headed by the Castros has always excluded the working class from political power, using repression and the ideology of nationalism to keep the Cuban workers and peasants atomized and politically passive. The Castro regime imprisons not only dissidents who actively collaborate with U.S. imperialism, but metes out repression to pro-socialist opponents, including militants like the Trotskyists in the 1960s. This illustrates the inherently contradictory nature of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste, which balances between the imperialist bourgeoisie on the one hand and the working class on the other.

Mackler bends over backward to lionize the "Castro team" as the great gatekeepers of socialism. He praises the bureaucracy's market reforms—which he describes as "within the context of maintaining its socialist ideals, aimed at improving the efficiency of the Cuban economy"—and absurdly crows that such reforms were "presented for discussion, debate and modification" to "millions of Cubans" before being implemented.

Market-oriented measures are an attempt to respond to economic stagnation within the framework of Stalinist bureaucratic control of the economy. As we wrote in the article "For Central Planning Through Soviet Democracy" (*WV* No. 454, 3 June 1988):

> "Economic planning...can be effective only when the workers, technical intelligentsia and managers identify themselves with the government which issues the plans....
>
> "Within the framework of Stalinism, there is thus an inherent tendency to replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasingly the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency."

Workers councils are not simply other "forms" of proletarian rule, but essential for the rational operation of a planned, socialized economy.

Mackler also claims that Cuba's "humanitarian efforts" abroad testify to its "ongoing revolutionary and socialist orientation." Many of Cuba's international interventions have indeed been heroic, most notably when the country dispatched thousands of troops to Africa in the 1970s to defend Angola's newly won independence from Portugal against reactionary local forces backed by U.S. imperialism and apartheid South Africa. But the objective of the Cuban Stalinists was never to assist in the overthrow of capitalism in Africa; their intervention was an expression of their political support to the bourgeois Angolan nationalists alongside whom they fought. Even under the gun of the U.S., Fidel Castro's appetite was always for "détente" via a "progressive" wing of American imperialism—i.e., the Democratic Party.

While fake Trotskyists like SA lavish praise on the Cuban Stalinist bureaucrats, they join in the imperialists' anti-Communist crusades for "democracy" elsewhere. SA allied with the worst enemies of the Cuban Revolution by championing capitalist-restorationist forces mobilized against the Soviet degenerated workers state in the 1980s, including Pope John Paul II's favorite "union," counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność.

Other pseudo-socialists oppose the Castro regime from the standpoint of virulent anti-Communist hostility to the Cuban workers state itself. Such is the case with the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S., estranged cousins of Tony Cliff's international tendency. The Cliffites are known for having written off Cuba, together with China and the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, as "state capitalist regimes" that "have nothing to do with socialism."

Writing in the journal *Jacobin* (December 22), Samuel Farber, a regular contributor to the ISO's press, hailed the resumption of relations with the U.S. as a "major gain for the Cuban people." According to Farber, who must take his cues from the U.S. State Department, that agreement "can improve the standard of living of Cubans and help to liberalize, although not necessarily democratize, the conditions of their political oppression and economic exploitation." For Farber, Cuba is just another state based on capitalist "exploitation," but differing from the U.S. in its lack of "democracy."

Revolutionaries in the U.S. have a special duty to defend Cuba against capitalist restoration and rapacious American imperialism. This cannot be reduced to the question of preserving the unique culture of Cuba or of simply blocking the incursions of imperialist monopolies on the island. The future of the Cuban masses—tied to the liberation of the hundreds of millions of toilers across Latin America and linked to the struggle to emancipate the exploited and oppressed in the U.S. belly of the beast—is a class question. We fight to forge a revolutionary workers party in the U.S. as a section of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International. Such a party would imbue in the multiracial American working class the understanding that defense of the Cuban Revolution is an integral part of its own fight against the U.S. capitalist rulers and for world socialist revolution. ■

WV Photo

New York City: Spartacists at demonstration in defense of the Cuban Five, June 2008.

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall

The ICL's Fight for a Red Soviet Germany

On the night of 3 January 1990, a quarter-million East Germans, mainly factory workers, heard two Trotskyists from the International Communist League speak at a rally in Treptow Park in East Berlin. Many more listened on the radio across the German Democratic Republic (DDR), as our speakers laid out a program for the rule of workers and soldiers councils across all of Germany. Initiated by the ICL and joined by the ruling Stalinist party, the united-front mobilization against the fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial at Treptow demonstrated that proletarian resistance could be organized to stop the mounting imperialist drive for capitalist annexation of the East German hureaucratically deformed workers state by West Germany. This resistance had the potential to spark social revolution in the West as well.

Coming after months of social upheaval marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall, struggles that signaled an incipient workers political revolution against the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR, Treptow terrified the German imperialists in Bonn. They responded by intensifying and accelerating their campaign to swallow the East German deformed workers state whole. Shaken by the events of January 3, the abdicating Stalinist regimes in Berlin and Moscow rushed in turn to pull the plug on the DDR.

Overwhelmed by the capitalist onslaught and betrayed by their Stalinist leadership, the working class acceded, and by summer the DDR ceased to exist. This cruel defeat opened the door to counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, where the working class was atomized and demoralized by decades of Stalinist misrule. Within two years, the homeland of the 1917 October Revolution had also fallen.

The social fabric of the former Soviet Union and of the deformed workers states that had been in its orbit was torn asunder and capitalism restored, bringing unprecedented agony: unemployment and poverty, the collapse of health care and other basic infrastructure, fratricidal nationalist war.

Spartakist

East Germany, 3 January 1990: Spartakist speaker addresses ICL-initiated, 250,000-strong united-front demonstration in Treptow Park against fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial. Inset: Spartakists' protest call.

With the removal of its Soviet nemesis, triumphant U.S. imperialism achieved unchallenged military supremacy, freeing its hands to pursue one predatory war after another. Capitalists around the world have successfully turned the screws on the working class in their respective countries, with reunited Germany taking the lead in extracting its pound of flesh from workers East and West and dictating austerity to the rest of Europe.

But the world of today was not a foregone conclusion in January 1990. Then, as now, it was desperately necessary to fight. Alone among all tendencies calling themselves Marxist, the ICL did fight, with all our might, against capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR, the rest of East Europe and the Soviet Union. The ruling Stalinist bureaucracies themselves, from Gorbachev on down, accepted the supposed superiority and inevitability of the capitalist system. Most of the left in West Germany and elsewhere threw their lot in with the forces of "democratic" counterrevolution in abetting the imperialist campaign for capitalist restoration.

The following article, translated and adapted from *Spartakist* No. 205 (October 2014), newspaper of our German comrades, illustrates how in 1989-90 three such groups sowed deadly illusions and paralyzing confusion in the working class. Examining this history is important. In China and the other remaining deformed workers states, the question will again be starkly posed: either the working class will take control of its own fate, opening the road to socialism, or it will fall prey to capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation. Crucial to victory for the combative workers will be the timely forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, that is, one animated by the Bolshevik program of revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

* * *

Almost a quarter century after capitalist restoration, the German bourgeoisie is still demonizing the DDR in the media whenever the opportunity arises. Incorporating the DDR into the West was for decades the goal of the capitalist ruling class and central to West German doctrine. The DDR, albeit bureaucratically deformed, was a workers state in which the capitalists had been expropriated as a class. The proletarian class basis of the DDR was an enormous advance, which explains why in 1989-90 so many people initially mobilized in its defense, rejecting capitalism and seeking a socialist society.

With the catastrophic effects of counterrevolution on the working class now obvious, ostensibly leftist organizations today falsely claim that they defended the gains of the DDR when its fate was at stake. This article will debunk such myths and lies, showing what some groups actually did in 1989-90, namely the League of Socialist Workers (BSA—today the Party for Social Equality, or PSG); the Communist Platform within the ruling East German SED-PDS (KPF—today part of the Left Party); and the now-extinct United Left.

In the summer of 1989, the DDR found itself in deep crisis. International events intensified the problem. In China, the student protests in Tiananmen Square had brought about the first stirrings of a proletarian political revolution that were then brutally suppressed by the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy in early June. In Warsaw, counterrevolutionary Solidarność—the only "trade union" ever embraced by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan—had seized government power from the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy. Fake leftists like the BSA cheered this company union for the CIA, the banks and the Vatican.

Early in September, Hungary opened its Austrian border to citizens of the DDR, leading to a wave of emigration. Many people pinned their hopes on Mikhail Gorbachev, the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the policy of *perestroika* market reforms and political liberalization (*glasnost*) he had proclaimed in 1985. DDR head of state Erich Honecker's rejection of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* contributed to the rise of an opposition to the DDR government. The Soviet Union had ceased subsidizing the sale of oil and other raw materials sold to the East European hureaucratically deformed workers states and now demanded world market prices payable in convertible currencies. The economic situation in the DDR grew considerably worse.

Early October witnessed the first demonstrations in the south of the DDR, which steadily increased in size. On October 18, Honecker was overthrown after he had supported using the armed forces against the demonstrators, a course rejected by Gorbachev and the Soviet Red Army command in the DDR. Furthermore, the *Betriebskampfgruppen*—factory militias that saw themselves as defenders of the workers state on the plant level—were unwilling to be deployed against their class brothers. The great mass of the East German workers, students and soldiers wanted to save the

On ICL's Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

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DDR from collapse. On 4 November 1989, five days before the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was a demonstration of over one million in East Berlin. Alongside purely democratic slogans and those for the right to travel abroad and opposing the SED (Socialist Unity Party), one could see explicitly pro-socialist banners and calls like "For Communist Ideals—No Privileges" and "Form Soviets."

Spartacists Intervene

The Trotskyist League of Germany (TLD), a predecessor of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), German section of the ICL, intervened in this nascent political revolution, seeking to provide the East German working class with revolutionary leadership. We mobilized all available forces for this intervention, the largest ever carried out by the ICL. In this period, over a third of our international membership was on the ground in the DDR. In two weeks, we distributed 200,000 copies of our November 15 leaflet "Workers Soviets to Power!" (reprinted in *WV* No. 490, 24 November 1989). We increased the frequency of our bimonthly newspaper *Spartakist* to biweekly and then to weekly.

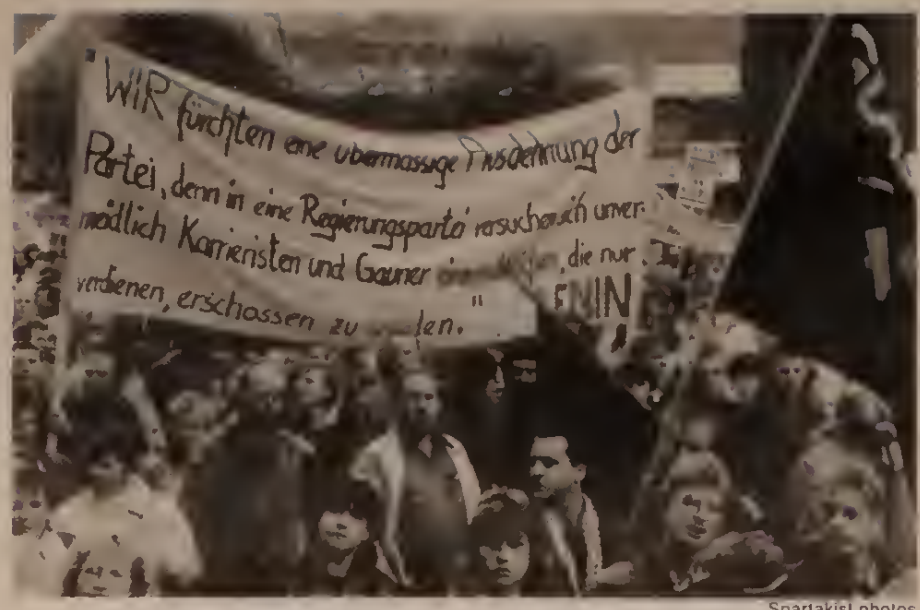
On December 7, we brought out the first issue of *Arprekorr* (Workers Press Correspondence), which appeared virtually every day. *Arprekorr* served as the collective organizer of the vanguard of the working class. It was the instrument for constructing the party necessary to lead a proletarian political revolution. In various cities, youth and workers formed groups to distribute *Arprekorr*, and we organized them into Spartacist Groups. Our propaganda was literally grabbed up. We appealed to workers in the East and West to unconditionally defend the DDR militarily against capitalist counterrevolution and to fight for revolutionary reunification of Germany. This meant sweeping away the Stalinist bureaucracy in the East through a political revolution and carrying out a social revolution in the West, i.e., one that would overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The establishment of workers and soldiers councils in the DDR and the ouster of the bureaucracy could have inspired the proletariat of the Soviet Union and East European workers states to follow their lead and the working class in West Germany to fight for a socialist revolution. The deepening capitalist barbarism we have today could have been averted.

We based ourselves on Leon Trotsky's analysis of the ruling Soviet bureaucracy as constituting not a class, but a fragile caste possessing no independent economic function that had politically expropriated the working class. Trotsky arrived at this understanding through his struggle, as principal leader of the Left Opposition, against the bureaucracy headed by Stalin, which consolidated as a caste after usurping political power in 1923-24. In 1935, Trotsky wrote: "The year 1924—that was the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor." This development was by no means inevitable. Recall that after World War I the conquest of state power by the working class was within grasp in many countries.

The Soviet Union itself emerged out of the successful 1917 proletarian revolution led by the Bolsheviks. To the revolutionary workers in the fledgling Soviet Union, one thing was clear: Workers in other countries, above all in Germany, had to follow their example. In Germany, there were revolutionary situations in 1918-19 and in 1923, but the German Communist Party's break with the social-democratic program was incomplete. The lessons of the first successful workers revolution, in Russia, were only partially assimilated, and the German revolution failed.

The ascendant bureaucracy in the Soviet Union rested on the resulting widespread demoralization of the Soviet masses, who were exhausted and hollowed out by the 1918-20 civil war. The extreme scarcity of goods in these initial years led to the establishment of a layer of administrators determining who was to give and who was to receive—and in the process ensuring that they did not lose out themselves.



Spartakist photos

East Berlin, November 1989: Demonstrators raise pro-socialist demands in early days of incipient proletarian political revolution. Banner above quotes Lenin, banner below reads "For Communist Ideals—No Privileges."

They welcomed and supported Stalin's seizing control of the Communist Party and replacing the Leninist program of world revolution with the nationalist lie of "socialism in one country."

At the cost of immeasurable sacrifice, the Soviet Union defeated the German Nazi regime in World War II. But the Soviet bureaucracy, with the support of the East German Stalinists, then did everything it could to prevent the unfolding of workers revolution in Germany, out of fear of unleashing a political revolution against its own rule. In East Germany, the expropriation of the capitalists by the occupying Soviet Red Army was a defensive measure against the imperialists, imposed from above. The subsequent collectivization of the means of production and introduction of a planned economy in the DDR were tremendous gains. However, the bureaucracy installed in the DDR, just like that in the Soviet Union, tacked back and forth between fear of the workers—in whose interests they defended, in a distorted way, the conquests of the workers state—and world imperialism, which their appeals to "peaceful coexistence" were designed to conciliate.

We rightly proceeded from the assumption that the Stalinist bureaucracy from top to bottom would split apart if the workers were to rise up in a political revolution. Such occurred in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, when large parts of the bureaucracy passed over to the side of the working class. Pál Maléter, a colonel in the Hungarian army, went over to the revolution, leading armed forces that were initially able to ward off an assault directed by Moscow against that political revolution.

Our perspective was that even leading members of the SED and the state apparatus, e.g., officers in the National People's Army (NVA), could be won to Trotskyism and the side of the workers in defense of the DDR, which did happen in small measure in 1989-90. Unlike a capitalist ruling class that, in the event of a revolution, necessarily unites around a program of counterrevolution, a Stalinist bureaucracy simply is not "counterrevolutionary through and through" as claimed by the BSA/PSG. Instead, in the event of a workers political revolution it will fragment, with pieces of it to be found on the opposing sides.

Trotsky's 1936 book *The Revolution Betrayed*—many copies of which we sold in 1989-90, particularly on 8-9 and 16-17 December 1989, the two weekends of the SED's Extraordinary Party Congress—lays out a vision of political revolution:

> "Let us assume first that the Soviet bureaucracy is overthrown by a revolutionary party having all the attributes of the old Bolshevism, enriched moreover by the world experience of the recent period. Such a party would begin with the restoration of democracy in the trade unions and the Soviets. It would be able to, and would have to, restore freedom of Soviet parties. Together with the masses, and at their head, it would carry out a ruthless purgation of the state apparatus. It would abolish ranks and decorations, all kinds of privileges, and would limit inequality in the payment of labor to the life necessities of the economy and the state apparatus. It would give the youth free opportunity to think independently, learn, criticize and grow. It would introduce profound changes in the distribution of the national income in correspondence with the interests and will of the worker and peasant masses. But so far as concerns property relations, the new power would not have to resort to revolutionary measures. It would retain and further develop the experiment of planned economy. After the political revolution—that is, the deposing of the bureaucracy—the proletariat would have to introduce in the economy a series of very important reforms, but not another social revolution."

Fake Trotskyists: The League of Socialist Workers

In the winter of 1989-90, we published *Spartacist* (German edition) No. 14, with the title "Trotskyism: What It Isn't—and What It Is!" It explained the aims of various groups that falsely invoked Trotsky in order to assist workers and leftists in the DDR in separating the wheat from the chaff. We characterized the BSA and the "International Committee of the Fourth International"—run by Gerry Healy until 1985 and today by David North—as "political bandits," a term coined by Lenin to describe those who embrace wildly incongruent political positions that happen to fit in with their self-serving opportunist appetites of the moment. Today, this outfit is known for its "World Socialist Web Site."

In 1979, they praised the Ba'athist dictator Saddam Hussein in Iraq as a leader in the struggle against "counterrevolutionary Stalinism," hailing him for having put to death 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party. In this period, the Healyites pocketed tens of thousands of dollars from the Ba'athist regime. Starting in the mid 1970s and extending to the early '80s, they also received lavish bribes from other Arab regimes, amounting to some £1 million (roughly $2 million). At that time, North was leading the American section of Healy's corrupt and violent International Committee.

The BSA intervened propagandistically in the events of 1989-90 and was sometimes confused with us, since it claimed to stand in continuity with Trotsky and the Fourth International, supported workers councils *on paper* and called for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. However, its intervention was aimed entirely at fighting Stalinism and the Stalinist bureaucracy as supposedly "counterrevolutionary through and through." Likewise, in its propaganda it regularly equated Stalinism with capitalism, which is fundamentally false.

The *economic* basis of the rule of capital is the exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie, which holds the means of production as its own. The bourgeoisie is a class that has to be overthrown through socialist revolution. In the course of this *social* revolution, the bourgeois state is destroyed. That state (above all the police, army, courts and prisons) serves and protects capitalist private property, including by repressing the working class and allowing the imperialists to invade foreign countries to conquer new markets. This apparatus

continued on page 8

AP

Hungary, 1956: Soviet tank surrounded by insurgents in Budapest during workers political revolution, which Moscow managed to suppress.

Germany...

(continued from page 7)

also makes it possible for the capitalists to bequeath their property.

In contrast, Stalinism means the *political* rule of a parasitic bureaucracy (a fragile, contradictory caste) that cannot assert any claim to own the means of production, which belong not to it but to society. No bureaucrat in the DDR was able to pass on to his descendants the factory he administered. In the DDR, production was organized for society and not in the interest of individual profit. To be sure, the bureaucracy did, in its corrupt and irrational fashion, control this production. There were no workers councils that might have planned the economy in a way that would help extend the socialist revolution. What was necessary in the DDR was a *political* revolution to democratize society and establish the political rule of the working class.

To return to Trotsky: "But so far as concerns property relations, the new power would not have to resort to revolutionary measures," i.e., there would exist no capitalist class that had to be expropriated, which in the case of the DDR had already occurred after 1945. The armed forces of the DDR, as part of the state apparatus, on the one hand protected socialized property but on the other reported to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which as a parasitic caste sitting atop the workers state was in fundamental contradiction to its economic foundations. It was necessary to "purge the state apparatus ruthlessly" and "introduce in the economy a series of very important reforms, but not another social revolution."

The BSA's position transmitted into the working class the false consciousness that the bureaucrats comprised a ruling class with a state of *its own* that must be destroyed alongside the bureaucracy itself. In contrast, we emphasized that the DDR workers state belonged to the international proletariat. We warned of the threat of capitalist counterrevolution and explained how it had to be combatted. Responding to a letter from an apprentice passionately opposing the slogan "Germany, United Fatherland" (that is, capitalist reunification), the BSA wrote: "This is why the BSA does not defend a 'two-state system,' i.e., neither the West German state nor the DDR state but rather calls for the workers of East and West Germany to unite in overthrowing these apparatuses of oppression." Here it's out in the open: The BSA was not simply against defending the DDR but for its overthrow as an "apparatus of oppression."

Whereas pro-socialist workers in the DDR wished to ward off the capitalist threat, the BSA totally downplayed that threat, thereby aiding and abetting counterrevolution. Doing so was an expression of its loyalty to the counterrevolutionary West German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which it had supported in elections for years. In the 1970s and '80s, the BSA preached to the West German working class that the SPD, if only it ruled by itself, could be forced to pursue "socialist policies." So much for the overthrow of capitalism! Immediately after capitalist reunification—in which the SPD functioned as the spearhead of German imperialism—the BSA again in 1990 called for the election of the SPD.

The Treptow Turning Point and the BSA Witchhunt

On 28 December 1989, fascists vandalized the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin-Treptow. The monument honors the Red Army soldiers who gave their lives fighting to liberate Berlin from the fascists in WWII. From mid December on, the Nazis were raising their heads in Monday demonstrations in the south of the DDR, where West German chancellor Helmut Kohl was celebrated with the waving of West German flags. We reacted at once, calling for a united-front demonstration in Treptow on January 3 to stop the Nazis.

The joint call of the TLD and the Spartacist Groups made clear:

> "Resurgent fascism is still an extremist fringe phenomenon. It would again threaten all mankind as soon as the first crises in a reunified *Grossdeutschland* [Greater Germany] appear. Today, however, the SPD/SDP [the Social Democracy in West and East Germany] is the chief instrument to bring about such a Greater Germany. Throttling the hydra-headed fascist monster now is to blunt this Social Democratic penetration."
>
> —"Revolution vs. Counterrevolution in Germany, 1989-90," *WV* No. 730 (25 February 2000)

We advanced vital demands that pointed the way to political revolution and opposed the sellout of the DDR.

On January 3, the pro-Soviet, anti-fascist and pro-socialist demonstration brought out 250,000 people, confirming that we had forced the SED into a united front. The mobilization was an expression of the power of our program, which embodied the socialist strivings of the working masses. Just before the demo, Lothar Bisky, a leader of the SED-PDS (the SED rebranded as the Party of Democratic Socialism), expressed it in this way: "You have the workers." But we had yet to cohere them around our program. Nonetheless, the potential for the explosive growth of a Trotskyist party was genuine. In many cases, the SED-PDS leaders knew this better than we did.

The participants in the demo—in large part factory workers—heard two counterposed political programs: that of the Stalinists, represented by Gregor Gysi, and that of the revolutionary Trotskyists, represented by a TLD speaker and a speaker from the Spartacist Groups. It was the first time since Trotsky's expulsion from the USSR and the smashing of the Left Opposition in the late 1920s that Trotskyists were able to speak to a mass audience in a deformed workers state.

We summed up this experience in 1992 in the main document of our Second International Conference:

> "But as Treptow later showed, from the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime over the future of the DDR. While we were calling for a government of workers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers insurrection by demobilizing all army units that had formed soldiers councils as a result of our early propaganda. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution."
>
> —"For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!" *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 47/48, Winter 1992-1993

The Treptow mobilization was the turning point. Up until then, the imperialists had most likely felt they had the DDR in their pockets. But now they went wild because that was obviously not the case. Out of thin air, they conjured up a campaign of lies that Goebbels would have envied. The West German media grotesquely sought to pin the blame for the fascist provocation on the SED. The tabloid *Bild* set the tone when it called Treptow "the SED's Nazi trick."

There was a powwow of the so-called Round Table—a counterrevolutionary assemblage of all DDR opposition groups, including the United Left, along with the SED-PDS and the SPD/SDP. The SPD fulminated against the Stalinist SED-PDS for having been on the same platform with Trotskyists who were calling the SPD/SDP "the Trojan horse of counterrevolution." A few days later, Gysi declared that calling the Treptow demonstration had been a mistake. Soon afterwards, Gorbachev and the East German Stalinists organized the sellout of the DDR to the capitalists. Following a meeting with Gorbachev in Moscow in late January, Hans Modrow of the SED-PDS, now the head of the DDR government, openly came out for "Germany, United Fatherland."

In an inflammatory article titled "The Trotskyist League of Germany (TLD)—Provocateurs in the Service of Stalinism!" (19 January 1990), the BSA ranted against us over the Treptow united-front mobilization: "Today their campaign 'against the fascist danger in the DDR' serves to save and restabilize the Stalinist state apparatus, army, secret service, justice, etc., because capitalist restoration can be brought about only with the assistance of a bloody anti-working-class dictatorship." Their counterrevolutionary hatred of the DDR workers state could not be more obvious. There were but two alternatives: defending the DDR deformed workers state while going forward to revolutionary reunification or... being thrown back to capitalism, which the SPD was promoting in the name of "freedom and democracy."

While we were exposing the SPD as the main instrument for a capitalist Greater Germany, the BSA was obscuring the class character of capitalist counterrevolution. In stating that it could only take place with "the assistance of a bloody anti-working-class dictatorship," they meant not the dictatorship of the West German capitalists but the "Stalinist state apparatus"! So what course remains? The social-democratic program for a democratic capitalist Germany—the reunified Fourth Reich.

The DDR was an instance of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*—that is, a state belonging to the workers—but with an anti-working-class *government* in power. Treptow provided the chance to motivate the Trotskyist program to the workers and the SED left, soldiers of the NVA, members of the People's Police and of the Soviet Army. In this open situation, when the working class was just *beginning* to fight for political power in its state, the BSA so distorted things that the workers state was turned into an instrument for capitalist restoration. This utterly exposes the BSA's anti-communism.

As for the Stalinist bureaucracy, it acceded to the German bourgeoisie's war of revenge on the DDR and sold out the workers state. We fought against this sellout! In contrast, the BSA, due to its Stalinophobia, went so far as to make light of the fascist danger. Right down to the elections for the Volkskammer (the DDR national assembly) in March 1990, the BSA barely mentioned the rise of German nationalism and the threat posed by the fascists. Instead, it denounced the anti-fascist mobilization in Treptow as a ploy by the fragmenting Stalinists and joined in the chorus of bourgeois forces that were portraying Treptow as a "Nazi trick of the SED."

When the Northite PSG today characterizes "the destruction of social gains and the reintroduction of capitalist exploitation in the DDR, East Europe and the Soviet Union" as the "most reactionary development of recent decades," everyone should be aware that the Northites themselves bear some responsibility. Their BSA forebears stood with the SPD on the front lines, paving the way for the destruction of the DDR.

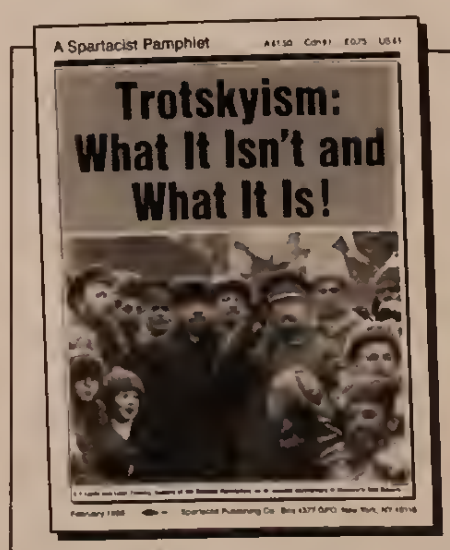
Similarly, the PSG opposes workers struggles led by trade unions on the grounds that trade unions "defend capitalism and sabotage any genuine struggle," which is merely a justification for strikebreaking. Trade unions must be defended as organizations of the working class, even when they have a reformist, chauvinist leadership, just as the workers states must be defended against capitalism and imperialism, including when a Stalinist bureaucracy has politically expropriated the workers. Writing off the trade unions is part of the PSG's anti-communist tradition of not taking the side of the working class and the workers states—all its empty phrases notwithstanding.

The United Left

The United Left (VL) was the left wing of the "Initiative for Peace and Human Rights," an organization in the petty-bourgeois anti-Communist citizens' rights movement, which in 1989 was operating under the protection of the Lutheran church in East Germany. That movement had its roots in the DDR peace movement of the early '80s, a counter-

Spartakist

14 January 1990: Spartakist banner at mass East Berlin demonstration reads: "For a Red Soviet Germany in a Socialist Europe!" First issue of daily *Spartakist/Arprekorr* (7 December 1989) demanded: "No Sellout of the DDR! Workers and Soldiers Councils, Now!"



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part of the nationalist peace movement in West Germany. Many so-called leftists, including the Communist Platform, shared the peace movement's objective of disarmament within a nationalist framework, expressed in the slogan "Germany Must Not Become a Battlefield." At bottom, this call was directed at the disarmament of the DDR and the Soviet Union, which would leave the workers states defenseless against imperialism.

VL raised the demand for "disarmament and demilitarization of both German states" and was for the withdrawal of the DDR from the Warsaw Pact and of West Germany from NATO. This position amounted to a call for two neutral German states, ignoring the fact that a class line ran between East and West. The wish for neutral states reflects deep-seated illusions in "pure democracy" and a peaceful capitalism, neither of which is possible.

VL was formally founded on 2 October 1989 in Berlin as a "grassroots democratic movement." Although it was officially dissolved in 2013, former leading members like Bernd Gehrke tour the country every so often to spread the fairy tale that VL had opposed the introduction of capitalism into East Germany. Its leadership stemmed centrally from the "Group of Democratic Socialists" centered around Herbert Misslitz, and arose out of the oppositional group Voices of Dissent in 1988. In the '80s, Voices of Dissent was part of the DDR peace movement and had ties to Ernest Mandel, then the leading light of the Pabloite United Secretariat (USec).

Pabloism is a post-WWII revisionist current in the Trotskyist movement. This revisionism destroyed Trotsky's Fourth International (then under the leadership of the impressionistic Michel Pablo) as the nucleus of a disciplined world party of socialist revolution. With a number of bureaucratically deformed workers states having just come into being under Stalinist leadership, the Pabloites projected a "new world reality" of "centuries of deformed workers states," totally dismissing the role of a revolutionary Trotskyist party. In *Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!*, we warned:

> "Now Mandel, who in the 1953 uprising of workers in East Germany [the DDR's first incipient workers political revolution] saw a wing of the bureaucracy as a solution, trumpets the 'upsurge of the mass movement rocking the GDR.' He talks of the need for a 'politically capable vanguard' to 'open the way for the victory and consolidation of the political revolution.' Don't buy it. Mandel and his followers have heralded everything from university students in the West to the mullahs in Iran to [Solidarność leader] Lech Walesa as the 'vanguard'."

VL strove for a "political merging of left organizations and individuals of diverse views and currents that are jointly...working for the socialist renewal of the DDR." This "unity of the left" conception struck a political chord with many workers and leftists who wanted to counter the capitalist offensive. But what was actually needed were united *actions* against capitalism and rising nationalism/fascism, actions like our united-front demonstration of 3 January 1990, in which various organizations march under their own banners (i.e., put forward their programs) while jointly combatting a common enemy. "Unity of the left," that is, an ongoing alliance, is nothing but a rotten political bloc that sweeps differences under the rug in the search for a common denominator, reducing politics to the lowest level. Any revolutionaries in such a bloc would find themselves subordinated to the opportunists.

VL had a contradictory program that could only confuse workers and leftists seeking an answer to the question of how to defend the DDR. In its appeal "For a United Left in the DDR," VL on the one hand advocated social ownership "of the means of production as the dominant foundation with the best prospects for the future," and on the other hand backed "free development of cooperatives and private property deriving from one's own labor." When push came to shove, VL resolved its own contradictions by hailing bourgeois democracy, poorly concealing its betrayal with the pious wish that "political suppression by a bureaucracy not be replaced by capitalist exploitation."

Redux

Dresden, December 1989: Counterrevolutionary rally outside meeting of West German chancellor Helmut Kohl and DDR premier Hans Modrow. Banner reads: "With Kohl Toward Unity of Germany."

On 3 November 1989, VL, other groups in the citizens' rights movement and the counterrevolutionary SDP put out a joint statement "For a Democratic Restructuring of State and Society." It called for reform of the constitution and free elections with secret ballots as well as freedom of assembly, association and the press. Here the Social Democracy was aiming to win the masses to its program for a "social market economy," i.e., capitalism, and VL assisted it in doing so.

In this context, the "free elections" demand was a call to support bourgeois democracy against the workers state, that is, a call for counterrevolution, which is why we opposed it. We are for workers democracy linked to defense of the workers state. Today, counterrevolutionary forces are uniting behind the call for "free elections" in deformed workers states such as Cuba and China. Only this year, German Chancellor Angela Merkel talked up "free elections" in Beijing to smooth a path for German imperialism, which wants to call the shots in a Chinese market reconquered for capitalism.

VL panicked and dropped its initial support to the Treptow demonstration, explaining the reversal: "The trigger was the fear that 'former SED cadres' would again attain positions of power" ("Statement of the Opposition to Wahlbündnis 90 [Electoral Alliance '90]," 3 January 1990). On the very same day as Treptow, they cobbled together a counterrevolutionary electoral alliance, with the citizens' rights movement and the SDP, from which they resigned on January 7. VL's leader, Thomas Klein, told us on January 21 that for his organization the main enemy was not the SPD but DDR State Security (the Stasi) and the SED apparatus—one could always resist the politics of the SPD after the elections if it became the government and attacked the workers. This was an unambiguous statement in favor of the West German capitalist system, in which workers voted every four years to decide which bourgeois government would oppress and exploit them.

In the wake of the Treptow mobilization, the rattled bourgeoisie launched an anti-Communist campaign against the Stasi. Beating the same drum, VL instantly called for the dissolution of the Stasi. On January 15, an anti-Communist mob stormed the central Stasi headquarters in Berlin. On March 29, VL participated in a witchhunt demonstration staged by New Forum (part of the citizens' rights movement). Held at Berlin's Alexanderplatz, this rally called for investigating all members of the Volkskammer to establish whether they had collaborated with the Ministry for State Security. We vehemently condemned this rightist campaign against the Stasi as a battering ram directed against the very existence of the DDR.

We warned against holding show trials à la Stalin that could only promote bloodthirstiness and encourage counterrevolutionary massacres. *Before* the anti-Communist witchhunt was in full swing, we had proposed how the working class might deal with the bloated Stasi apparatus in ways favorable to the defense of the DDR. After all, the Stasi did not just go after the class enemy but also spied on the DDR populace, with the aim of intimidating and atomizing the working class. For example, we suggested taking agents out of the Stasi and putting them to work in the DDR's collectivized factories and farms. Workers tribunals linked to authoritative workers councils should deal with individual secret police who had grossly abused their office. Many actions taken against the Stasi leadership prior to Treptow had a pro-socialist character. Thus, the Felix Dzerzhinsky Guard Regiment (military arm of the Ministry for State Security) prevented the Stasi from shredding its files and also set up a soldiers council.

We called for workers militias under the leadership of workers and soldiers councils, first of all to stop the fascist danger in its tracks. Former Stasi members who wished to defend the workers state would have found a place in them. The attacks incited by the bourgeoisie and its lackeys, such as the storming of Stasi headquarters, served exclusively to whip up an atmosphere for bloody reprisal and to intimidate pro-DDR workers and leftists, opening the road to counterrevolution. The bourgeoisie hated the Stasi because it, in fact, sometimes acted in defense of the workers state. From the standpoint of the working class, defending the DDR was no misdeed—but undermining and selling it out as the SED-PDS Stalinists did was truly a crime!

AP

Anti-Communist mob storms central headquarters of East German secret police (Stasi) in Berlin, 15 January 1990.

The Founding of the Communist Platform

Many of the Communist Platform (KPF) leaders stemmed from the so-called socialist intelligentsia and, like Eberhard Czichon, were supporters of Gorbachev and Bukharin, the latter the leader of the Right Opposition in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s. The founders of the KPF reflected the appetite of broad layers within the SED to build a genuinely communist party. SED members who saw themselves as communists were repelled by the social-democratization of their party as expressed in some of the calls for an Extraordinary Party Congress. For example, eleven SED local organizations in Berlin came out for a "socialist people's party."

In response, a 1 December 1989 "Call by the Group for Initiating a 'Communist Party of the DDR' (KP-DDR)" stated:

> "It is with concern that we note that it is not just the Stalinist apparatuses that are secretly positioning themselves for a counterattack but also other forces that are increasingly gaining influence within the SED. This is manifested in demands for a 'socialist people's party,' in the formulation 'take into greater consideration the character of the SED as unity party' and similar formulations."

Additionally, the KP-DDR initiative argued for a "revolutionary vanguard." One part of that group, however, envisioned a new party solely as an "ongoing counterbalance" to the SED, i.e., doing nothing save pressuring it from the left.

In this tumultuous situation, with everything in flux, we argued consistently for the need for a Leninist egalitarian party and kept to our course of splitting the SED. Our call for an egalitarian party made clear that we were against bureaucratic privileges and that our aim was not one of reforming the old SED but of building a genuine communist party of the working class. Between the two weekends of the SED Extraordinary Party Congress held in East Berlin, at which we sold more literature than there were participants, we received the following 10 December 1989 letter from a worker:

> "I was very happy to learn of you. I'm an SEDer. But this was probably never truly my party and even less so now, where this 'position paper' was adopted that abandons everything and lumps us together with the Social Democrats and I don't know who else. Yes, this country needs a new, strong KP [Communist Party]—I'd like to get into contact with you regarding this."

Countless subjective communists were frustrated by the results of the Congress, which set the SED firmly on a social-democratic course. Given this mood, as well as general sentiment for a new Communist Party and the fact that a group of SED leaders had already announced their intention to split, our intervention and activity in the DDR must have seemed quite threatening to the new SED-PDS leadership around Hans Modrow and Gregor Gysi. Gysi convinced the future founders of the KPF to set up their Communist Platform inside the SED-PDS (later renamed the PDS) and not to split that party.

Heinz Marohn, one of the founders of the KPF, described this decision forthrightly at a 1995 PDS conference:

> "We saw in the SED/PDS a political movement that, in the form of a party, embraced various currents and we strongly opposed all efforts to dissolve

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Union Acts to Defend Victimized Bus Driver

NYC

Bus drivers and other members of New York City's Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 were outraged when a union brother was arrested after a tragic accident in Brooklyn on December 23. For at least an hour on December 24, buses out of four or more Brooklyn depots—Jackie Gleason, Flatbush, Ulmer Park and East New York—did not roll, as drivers engaged in a work-to-rule action protesting the arrest. Local 100 president John Samuelsen condemned the arrest as "an attack against all New York City Transit Workers."

The bus operated by 57-year-old Reginald Prescott had struck and killed a man in the crosswalk at a dangerous intersection in Brooklyn during the evening rush hour. A seven-and-a-half-year veteran with a safe record behind the wheel, Prescott was making a difficult left turn under poor conditions when the pedestrian, a 78-year-old man, was hit. Both the driver and the pedestrian had a green light. The distraught driver was taken to a nearby hospital and treated for trauma. Prescott was arrested and cuffed at the hospital, in front of his wife, on the misdemeanor charge of "failing to yield."

Victimized by a city law that was revised under Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio's "Vision Zero" traffic initiative to criminalize such accidents, Prescott was promptly suspended by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) without pay. The TWU bureaucracy undermines the defense of the union membership by its support to capitalist politicians, including by channeling votes to the Working Families Party, a shill for the Democrats that supported de Blasio for mayor in the 2013 elections.

In a transit system chock full of hazardous work, driving a bus in traffic-clogged NYC with its millions of pedestrians is especially tough. And it's not made any easier by MTA management constantly hounding TWU members, badgering them to keep to strict schedules. Before Vision Zero, the MTA was already subjecting traumatized bus drivers involved in fatal accidents to drug tests and, sometimes, suspensions. The bosses routinely shift blame for accidents caused by unsafe conditions onto transit workers. Put through the MTA wringer after such tragedies, some drivers never go back to the job. Now they get hauled off to jail as well, with the threat of a life-wrecking criminal record hanging over their heads.

One bus driver told *Workers Vanguard* that TWU members at the East New York depot have taken up a collection to help offset Reginald Prescott's lost wages. When a hearing is convened in the case—February 24, according to the union—Local 100 members and their allies should pack the courtroom. ***Drop the charges against Reginald Prescott! Reinstate him now!*** ■

Archives...

(continued from page 2)

mines, mills, railroads, banks—and a class of workers composed of those who own *only* their mental and physical ability to work, and who must sell that ability to the capitalists by the hour or week in order to live. This includes public employees who sell their labor power to local, state, or federal governments as postal workers, motormen, clerks, sanitation workers, teachers, welfare workers, etc. There are also a variety of middle classes—small merchants and farmers, professional people, etc.—but the main decisive classes in society are workers and capitalists. Despite Wurf's and the [fake-Trotskyist] Workers League's protests that the police are workers simply because they are salaried employees, ignoring entirely their very special social function, it is obvious that based on the above criteria, cops, as professional strikebreakers, fall entirely *outside* the social relations of the process of production, regardless of their social origins, and so are neither workers, nor part of the working class. While most policemen are generally of working class social origins, they are specifically hired and trained to function as class traitors, and bear a greater resemblance to a mercenary army, de-classed socially and economically. This was easier to see in the company towns of the late 19th century where the police were often hired by the coal mine or factory owners. As late as the early 1940's, old Henry Ford had his own goon squad to keep the workers in line and break up unionizing attempts. The mere fact that these scum were paid for their dirty work obviously didn't make them "workers," in any scientific class sense of the word. The same goes for Pinkertons, FBI agents, labor spies, informers, etc.

ROLE OF THE POLICE

The police, then, are special bodies of armed men separated entirely from the rest of the population. These police, and also the Army and National Guard, etc., backed up by a system of prisons, are the backbone, the very essence, of the capitalist state, whose basic function is to maintain through force or threat of force the rule of that class in order to economically exploit the working class. In every important and decisive conflict, the cops are the instrument of that state apparatus and stand on the side of private property and big business, backed up by pro-capitalist laws, judges, courts, and prisons.

In no sense are these bodies of armed men "neutral" in the class struggle, although great efforts are made to convince people that they are. It isn't often that one sees the class character of the state power of big business operating in its naked form. Where the government is an outright capitalist dictatorship, which ruthlessly suppresses all trade unions and workers political organizations, wiping out representative government and all democratic rights and institutions, as was the case in Nazi Germany, the class character of the system is easily recognizable and unmistakable. But this causes a great deal of trouble for the capitalists and they only resort to naked military rule when the working people are no longer fooled by the sugar coating of "law and order" and "peaceful, legal means" and decide to struggle to run their own society in their own name, directly threatening therefore the social rule of big business. Every strike has all the elements of this life and death struggle, with the company having the pickets arrested, hauled into court by the police, charged by the judge with violating some right of private property, and sent off to prison for daring to challenge the rule of the company.

This is why the question of the role of the police, as raised by the New York police action, is of such fundamental importance. It goes to the very heart of the struggle of the working class and does not allow for any mistakes. Labor bureaucrats understand this and constantly strive to obscure the real nature of the system, since it is their job to keep the workers under control. But for us there's only one conclusion to draw from this issue: the cops are our enemies, and they are dangerous. ■

Germany...

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> the Party. This brought us respect in the Party. There never would have been a Communist Platform had it not been needed. Back then, in late 1989, a lot of stuff was gotten rid of and only what was necessary and desired was preserved. The Party was on the point of dissolution. This would have brought the DDR to the verge of anarchy. Neither friend nor foe desired this. Thus, all the Party comrades had to close ranks, and many who saw themselves as Communists (without being able to say precisely what constituted Communist policies in this situation) tied themselves to Communist Platform—not organizationally but in terms of their ideals."

Like all Stalinists, the KPF was first and foremost bent on avoiding "anarchy and chaos," i.e., mobilizations by the workers. The January 3 Treptow demonstration was the one and only exception, as the SED-PDS, under the pressure of our program, was unable to avoid calling it. The KPF was founded precisely to avert splits from the SED-PDS to the left, that is, in the TLD's direction, thereby preventing the construction of a revolutionary party that might have been in a position to lead a political revolution. It was not accidental that the KPF was formed on December 30, only four days before we spoke to the mass base of the SED-PDS, centrally about the forging of a new workers party in the spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

When Modrow returned from the Soviet Union at the end of January, the KPF failed to utter one word of criticism against his program for capitalist reunification, let alone oppose the slogan "Germany, United Fatherland." Instead, it reinforced the widespread illusion among pro-socialist workers and PDS members that the Modrow government constituted the last barrier against the sellout of the DDR. In addition to agreeing to capitalist reunification, the PDS made clear that it was for a "market economy...with pronounced social and ecological goals," one that "stimulates and rewards performance."

Nonetheless, the KPF depicted the PDS as if it had been "a determined leftist force...against the restoration of capitalist relationships in the DDR." Thus, the KPF obscured the true significance of the capitulation by PDS leaders to the German bourgeoisie and their acceptance of the Kremlin's betrayal. In no small part, it was thanks to the KPF that capitalism was able to catch the workers unaware in their hour of greatest danger.

Defend Past Gains, Fight for the Future

The elections to the Volkskammer, which had been moved forward to March, were a referendum on capitalist reunification, that is, yes or no to capitalist counterrevolution. We insisted that every organization had to take an unambiguous position before the working class on this life-or-death question. We emphatically said "No!" and ran in the elections, stating: "Where the SpAD is unable to run a candidate, we call on our supporters to vote for those parties and groups that stand clearly against capitalist reunification."

But we were the only ones to fight capitalist counterrevolution! On 18 March 1990, approximately 80 percent of voters cast ballots for counterrevolutionary parties, i.e., for open, speedy capitalist reunification. We told the bitter truth: "Fourth Reich Wins DDR Elections." Counterrevolution had won—a bitter defeat not just for the German but also the international working class.

Everyone who wants to fight capitalism alongside the workers and feels that communism is worth striving for should study the history of our intervention into the events of the incipient political revolution. Drawing these lessons is vital to victorious class struggle and revolutions, for which leadership by a proletarian vanguard party is essential. For the same reason, workers and leftists must acquaint themselves with the history of betrayal of those who today put on a left face but in reality supported counterrevolution. Given their program and history of not defending past gains, groups like David North's Party for Social Equality, the KPF in the Left Party and proponents of the former United Left can only pave the way to new defeats. ■

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Drop All Charges Against Anti-Police Brutality Protesters!

NYC

Tens of thousands rallied on December 13 for the "Millions March NYC" against cop killings of black people. In the following days, the NYPD thugs in blue and their supporters in the hourgeois media launched a witchhunt, hroadcasting pictures of seven people who allegedly assaulted two cops on the Brooklyn Bridge. A $25,000 bounty made these individuals targets for any vigilante. Now six of them are facing bogus felony and misdemeanor charges such as resisting arrest, obstructing governmental administration, riot and assault on a cop. CUNY English professor Eric Linsker is accused of throwing trash cans at the cops, and five other protesters—32BJ SEIU union organizer Robert Murray, Zachary Campbell, Maria Garcia, Cindy Gorn and Jarrod Shanahan—are said to have engaged in a confrontation after police grabbed Linsker.

Grainy videos of the incident on the Brooklyn Bridge show the cops scuffling with a small group of protesters. The actual footage did not deter NYPD Chief of Manhattan Detectives William Aubry from ranting that Murray's supposed punching of a cop was "right up there with being one of the most violent acts that I've seen." In a statement in defense of the protesters, the Trayvon Martin Organizing Committee pointedly noted that Aubry and the NYPD have not used the term "violent" "to describe the police murder of Eric Garner, the execution of Ramarley Graham and Akai Gurley, or the countless others harassed and brutalized by the police" (trayvonoc.wordpress.com). It is the cops who are the real perpetrators of violence. From Ferguson to Oakland to New York City, protesters against police terror have been beaten, tear-gassed, shot with rubber bullets and arrested by armies of cops.

The vindictive prosecution of the New York protesters is intended to silence and intimidate those who oppose the police's rampant repression. It is aimed against all those ground under the heel of capitalist society—not only black people and minorities, but also the multiracial labor movement, whose struggles have always been met with capitalist state repression. Yet rather than defending the protesters facing prosecution, the 32BJ SEIU tops placed Murray on unpaid leave. This betrayal can only serve to disarm and isolate the union in its own struggles. The workers movement must he won to the need to champion the cause of all the oppressed. We demand: ***Drop the charges against the New York protesters, and oll those orrested in protests against police brutality across the country! Down with the witchhunt of protesters!*** ■

NYC Cop Backlash...

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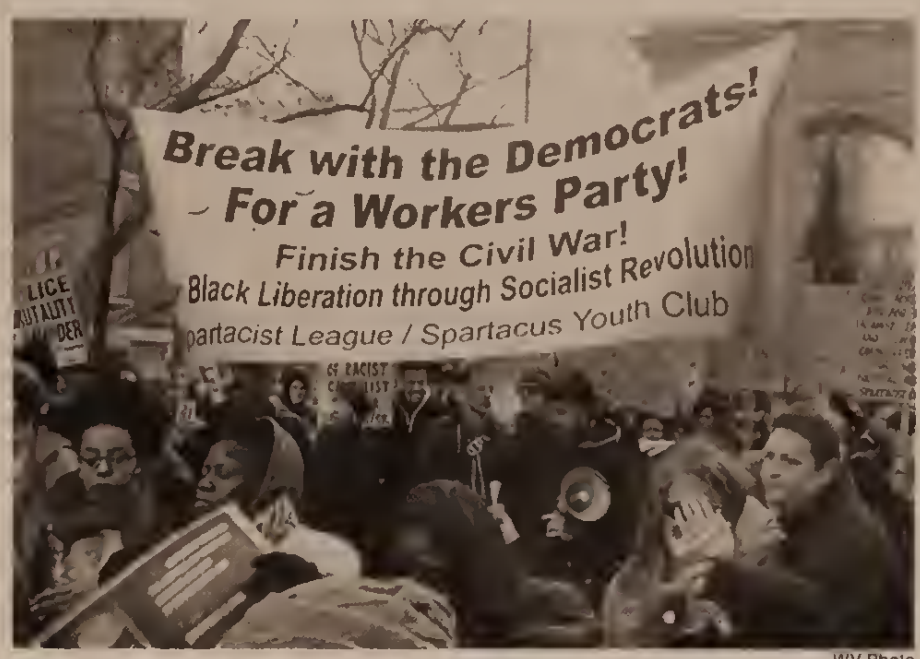
about it. The answer must flow from an understanding of how this class-divided society works. Under capitalism, a tiny elite that owns the factories, mines and banks lives off the sweat and toil of working people. The cops are a core part of the state machinery of repression that ensures the domination of capital over labor. With black oppression rooted in this system of production for profit, cop terror is wielded by America's rulers to maintain the forcible segregation of the hlack masses at the bottom of society, despite their lying assertion of equality. Efforts to reform the police cannot alter its fundamentally anti-working-class and racist nature. As our comrades chanted during the December 13 "Millions March NYC": "Police reform is a hustle, fists in the air for class struggle!"

The crimes of the cops should be met with massive, militant protest based on the social power of labor. The pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, though, pushes the suicidal lie that cops are "fellow workers" and that the PBA & Co. are part of the labor movement. A prime example in NYC is the leadership of the transit union, TWU Local 100, whose president, John Samuelsen, issued a statement referring to the two dead cops as "our Union Brothers." The Local 100 tops welcomed Lynch onto the platform of union rallies in the lead-up to the 2005 transit strike—which defied a state ban on puhlic employee strikes. For leading the workers out, Samuelsen's predecessor, Roger Toussaint, was later arrested and briefly jailed.

For this multiracial union, embracing the racist cops is particularly grotesque. Eric Garner's mother, sister and niece are all Local 100 members, but the leadership did almost nothing to organize solidarity with them in their grief. When the grand jury decision not to indict the cop who killed Garner was announced, Samuelsen offered: "In federal court, in civil suit and in the next life we will bear witness until justice is served." What is needed is a mobilization of the social power of the unions to fight racist capitalist injustice *in this life!*

The role of the cops as deadly enemies of labor is starkly demonstrated when workers go on strike. It's the cops who enforce court injunctions, protect scabs, attack picket lines and arrest strikers. In fact, the unions were huilt in hard, often bloody, struggle against the hosses and their cops, National Guard, company goons, etc. From the Haymarket martyrs of 1887, hanged in Chicago for fighting for the eight-hour day, and the Ludlow, Colorado, massacre of striking miners and their families by the Rockefellers' hired guns in 1914, to the PATCO air traffic controllers fired and dragged away in chains for striking in 1981, labor struggles have always run up against the capitalist state. When there are long periods with little to no class struggle like today, the social role of the cops can become obscured to the working class.



WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at December 13 "Millions March NYC" demonstration against racist police killings.

A vivid expression of the anti-working-class nature of the PBA was its denunciation of unions that had co-sponsored a march last August in Staten Island against police brutality, above all the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The steering committee of the UFT caucus "Movement of Rank and File Educators"—which counts a supporter of the reformist International Socialist Organization, Brian Jones, as a founding member—issued a statement urging "the leaderships of the UFT and PBA, to find ways to work together and unite us."

Rather than building unity with the shock troops of capitalist rule, there must be a fight for the independence of the labor movement from all agencies of the capitalist state. It speaks volumes that the first thing the NYPD's Peter Liang reportedly did after shooting the unarmed Akai Gurley in a Brooklyn housing project in November was to text his PBA rep, while Gurley lay dying. Or take the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association that is defending its members' sadistic reign of terror against inmates in the Rikers Island jail. What the cop organizations want is more officers and weapons and fewer restrictions in going after workers, blacks, immigrants and leftists—and to get paid more for doing it.

In the early 1930s, reformist leaders of the German working class politically disarmed the workers by preaching reliance on the police to stop Hitler's Nazis. Those cops had largely been recruited over the years from among pro-socialist workers. Leon Trotsky—one of the leaders of the 1917 Russian Revolution, which saw the proletariat smash the existing capitalist state apparatus and establish their own state power—sharply warned in *What Next?* (1932): "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker.... And above all: every policeman knows that though governments may change, the police remain."

Over recent decades, while workers unions in the U.S. have been decimated, "unions" representing cops, prison guards and security guards have grown tremendously. The presence of large numbers of cops and security guards within unions like the SEIU and AFSCME is especially dangerous. *Cops out of the unions!*

A recent *Daily News* (30 December) opinion piece titled "Labor Must Reject Pat Lynch's Bitter Bile" by Jonathan Tasini, former president of the National Writers Union who has twice sought the Democratic Party nomination for public office, reflects unease within a section of the union bureaucracy over its association with the PBA. Recoiling from Lynch's venom, Tasini beseeches city union leaders to speak out against the PBA head because "standing hy while a rogue union leader launches vituperative attacks may weaken public support for the mayor." For Tasini, the overriding priority is to preserve labor's ties to the Democratic Party, which no less than the Republicans is a political instrument of the class enemy.

What is necessary is to mobilize the social power of labor to fight for its own interests and those of the oppressed, in opposition to the bosses, their political representatives and their state. But the possibility for such a mobilization is undermined by the sellout labor bureaucracy, which shackles the potential power of the unions by feeding workers the lies that cops are their union brothers and sisters and that Democrats are their friends. The way forward is to fight for a class-struggle leadership of the trade unions. As long as the capitalist system remains, so will racist cop terror. To lead it in the struggle to break the capitalist state power and expropriate the bourgeoisie, establishing a workers government, the working class needs its own, revolutionary party. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Amid Protests Against Racist Police Terror

NYC Cop Backlash

Weeks of mass protests that erupted after the policemen who killed Michael Brown and Eric Garner got off have left cops across the country seething. These hired guns of the capitalist rulers are howling over any criticism of how they do their job, which in racist capitalist America does include terrorizing and killing unarmed black people. Leading the pack in New York City are the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) and its ilk, which have seized on the December 20 killing of two Brooklyn cops to further push their agenda of bonapartism: that is, to stand above the law as judge, jury and executioner. The nationwide mobilization of police for the funerals of the two cops on consecutive weekends was a chilling show of force. Now the Fraternal Order of Police is building a January 17 "End the Madness: Sea of Blue" march in Washington, D.C.

The NYPD has once again gone ballistic at the very suggestion that there should be some checks on its enforcement of racist "law and order" in the city. The cops want an entirely free hand, and it is no accident the PBA and similar groups are spearheading the backlash to the protests. The PBA is not a union in the sense of a workers organization but a political club reflecting the cops' awareness of their social role as the guard dogs of the capitalist order.

As the mayor of New York City, which he manages on behalf of the Wall Street plutocrats and real estate barons, Bill de Blasio is commander-in-chief of the NYPD. So when he expressed a little sympathy for those opposing cop terror, de Blasio's thugs in blue were furious, blaming him for encouraging the protests. The rabid PBA head Patrick Lynch denounced the mayor for supposedly throwing cops "under the bus."

De Blasio also set off the cops when he stated in a TV interview that he had to warn his 17-year-old son Dante, who is biracial, to be careful not to make any sudden moves when dealing with police—common-sense advice for black youth in this vicious capitalist society that is racist to the core. In response, Ed Mullins, head of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, slammed the mayor: "He may want to think about moving out of New York City completely. He just doesn't belong here." Mullins, Lynch and their cohorts insist that de Blasio either tell protesters to stop or get out of the way.

Reuters photos

Top: Cops attack anti-police brutality demonstration in Manhattan, November 25. Bottom: Police turn their backs on video feed of NYC mayor Bill de Blasio speaking at cop funeral, December 27.

After Ismaaiyl Brinsley, who has been described as mentally unstable, killed the two NYC cops, Lynch went on a tear over the "blood on many hands," citing "the office of the mayor" and those in the streets protesting police brutality. De Blasio called for a pause to the protests and Police Commissioner William Bratton pronounced the killings their "direct spinoff." Over 20 people have since been arrested for allegedly threatening cops, including a 16-year-old who was held in jail for a week over Christmas because he posted "Let's Kill the Cops" on his Facebook page. Despite the NYPD's sinister ravings and the mayor's admonishments, the protests have not come to a halt. The initial wave of protest was a measure of how fed up a wide swath of society is with daily cop violence.

The two funerals were attended by tens of thousands from across the country, with the *New York Times* (28 December) describing the scene at the first as "nothing but thick rows of police officers as far as anyone could see." Large numbers of cops turned their backs on de Blasio when he spoke at the funerals, as had been done when he visited the hospital where the two cops were taken. Here was a demonstrative show of insubordination and resistance to being put on a leash by civilian authorities when what they really want to do is run wild, wreaking vengeance on protesters and the ghetto and barrio poor with impunity.

Among the bourgeois politicians speaking at the first funeral was U.S. vice president Joe Biden, signaling that the maintenance of "law and order" in NYC, the center of American finance capital, is of vital concern to the highest levels of the capitalist rulers. Reflecting this concern, the bourgeoisie's paper of record, the *New York Times*, issued an editorial titled "Respect for NYPD Squandered in Attacks on Bill de Blasio" (29 December). The next day, after statistics were released showing that the police were engaging in a slowdown (summonses for minor offenses had plunged by over 90 percent compared to the previous week), the *Times* instructed the cops to "do your jobs." The capitalist rulers in the city and beyond are worried that the NYPD has gone too far, doing further damage to the illusion that the police "serve and protect" the population as a whole. In reality, the job of the cops is to maintain the rule of the capitalist exploiters through violent suppression of the working class, black people and all the oppressed.

In New York City, as elsewhere, the cops have a longstanding appetite for bonapartism. In 1992, when black Democratic mayor David Dinkins moved to replace the cops on the sham Civilian Complaint Review Board with civilians appointed by the mayor, a 10,000-strong cop mob stormed the steps of City Hall. That veritable lynch mob was an example of how in America, where capitalist rule has always had racial oppression at its base, even those black people who have supposedly made it are still branded by the color of their skin. (For more on PBA bonapartism, see article on page 2.)

Today, there are racist undertones to the vitriol aimed by the cops and their supporters at de Blasio, whose wife and children are black. A racist, pro-NYPD throng gathered outside City Hall on December 19, where some disgustingly sported shirts reading "I Can Breathe," a mockery of Eric Garner's last words as cops were choking him to death. Al Sharpton, who in the past wore a wire to spy on black politicians for the FBI and cops, has also been a target, receiving death threats for supposedly being "anti-cop." Sharpton has been prominent around the protests against cop terror, working overtime to direct the outrage into support for the capitalist Democratic Party and reliance on the federal government. He serves to reinforce illusions that the police can be reformed to act in the interests of the oppressed by getting rid of a few "bad apples," never passing up an opportunity to emphasize how much he supports the police.

The tensions between the PBA and the mayor boil down to how much democratic window dressing to put on the police. During his 2013 mayoral bid, de Blasio attracted support from many black people and Latinos by running as an opponent of stop-and-frisk. Lynch's hysterical claims that de Blasio "thinks he's running a fucking revolution" couldn't be further from the truth; de Blasio's policies are at bottom a repackaging of racist cop terror.

While stop-and-frisk has been curtailed and a few other largely cosmetic reforms have been introduced, arrests for minor offenses have continued unabated under de Blasio/Bratton's "broken windows" policing strategy. And, of course, it was "broken windows" that brought about the death of Eric Garner, who was targeted for selling loose cigarettes. Bratton introduced "broken windows" policing to NYC during his first stint as police chief in the 1990s. De Blasio's reappointment of Bratton as chief gave a green light to the NYPD to keep up the war on black and Latino youth.

Cops Are Not Workers

The utter contempt that cops have for black lives has come to the fore in the past few months. But the question is what to do

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1060

23 January 2015

"National Unity" Crusade After Paris Massacres

France: Down With "War on Terror" Repression!

In the wake of the horrific murders committed by jihadists in Paris, U.S. secretary of state John Kerry visited France to make a show of embracing French president François Hollande. Signaling how the French ruling class intends to capitalize on the recent shootings, the Socialist Party (SP) head of state likened them to the 11 September 2001 attacks, which in the U.S. led to a vast expansion in the state's repressive arsenal and a qualitative diminution in democratic rights. In that spirit, the war criminals in Washington will host a February 18 global "security summit" with the French and other bloodstained imperialist powers. Kerry and fellow White House officials have already taken part in high-level talks with their European counterparts to pave the way for a renewed "war on terror" crackdown.

Kicking its machinery of repression into high gear, the Hollande government arrested scores for statements and protests it deemed as apologizing for terrorism while pouring troops and more cops onto the streets. With the war drums beating louder and faster, Paris dispatched an aircraft carrier group to launch bombing raids over Iraq, escalating its involvement in the U.S.-led war against ISIS.

Moves to ramp up the "anti-terror" crusade in Europe are further fuel for a rising tide of racist hysteria directed against dark-skinned people and immigrants. Far-right parties spewing anti-immigrant vitriol have been climbing in opinion polls in France, Britain, Austria and the Netherlands. In Germany, the racist, national-chauvinists of Pegida have held weekly rallies in Dresden of up to 25,000 people.

Contrary to imperialist propaganda, Islam holds no monopoly on fundamentalist terrorism. In the U.S., the countless bombings, arson attacks and assaults against abortion clinics, including the

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Senate Report Whitewashes White House

CIA Torture, Inc.

Department of Defense

Rendition flight of U.S. "war on terror" captives.

On December 9, the Senate Intelligence Committee released its summary report on the CIA's post-9/11 detention and torture program. Most of those whose lives were destroyed under this program were picked up in Afghanistan and Iraq following the U.S. invasions—for the "crime" of being in those countries. The heavily censored summary (less than one-tenth the length of the classified full report) sheds a little more light on the crimes of U.S. imperialism by detailing the sadistic brutality of the CIA torturers. Yet this report, which mostly documents what was already known, is the mere tip of the iceberg in the "war on terror."

The list of 119 detainees in the report does not touch on the many tens of thousands detained and tortured by the U.S. military in Abu Ghraib and beyond, its local proxies in Afghanistan and Iraq, or the governments that received prisoners as part of the CIA's "extraordinary rendition" operations. The report is also a complete cover-up for the White House, portraying the program as a rogue operation with President George W. Bush kept in the dark. In fact, both Bush and his vice president Dick Cheney have affirmed their knowledge of the program.

A section of the U.S. capitalist ruling class is worried that earlier exposures of the CIA's widespread use of torture have done damage to the pretense that it is a champion of "human rights." President Barack Obama declared torture to be "contrary to our values" and Democrat Dianne Feinstein, the Senate committee's chair, chimed in that it was "a stain on our values and our history." By fessing up to the existence of the (supposedly defunct) CIA program and tossing the public some tidbits, the Senate report is an attempt to close the book on the issue.

The Senate committee's main criticism of the CIA program is that torture "was not an effective means of acquiring intelligence." Anyone subjected to the CIA's depraved tortures would tell their tormenters whatever they wanted to hear, true or not. Such barbarism primarily serves as a means to establish domination and instill terror more widely. As one CIA officer said, torture like "rectal hydration" established the interrogator's "total control over the detainee."

Those dragged off to the CIA "black site" prisons were shackled in stress positions for extended periods, sometimes with broken limbs, and subjected to sleep deprivation and mock executions. One detainee, after weeks of waterboarding, was placed in a coffin-sized box for 266 hours. Another, Gul Rahman, was beaten, shackled to the wall of his cell and stripped of most of his clothing. The next day, he was dead from hypothermia. The report admits that 26 people did not even meet the CIA's own standards for being detained, including two who were wrongly held "based solely on information fabricated by a CIA detainee" who had been tortured. The torturers realized that another man wasn't the person they thought he was, but not before subjecting him to ice baths and 66 hours of standing without sleep.

No doubt there are many, especially young activists, who see a ray of hope that the CIA will be reined in as a result of these latest revelations, to which we can only say: "Ain't going to happen." The U.S. has tortured, is torturing and will continue to torture so long as it exists as a capitalist country. Under capitalism, society is ruled by the bourgeoisie, a tiny stratum that owns the means of production (factories, mines, banks, etc.) and lives off the profits extracted from the working class. That capitalist ruling class relies on the organized violence of its state apparatus to maintain its position atop the exploited and oppressed masses.

Under imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, mass murder, torture and humiliation necessarily accompany the exploitation of labor and the ceaseless struggle of competing advanced powers to dominate the world. The brutalization and dehumanization of "lesser peoples," *untermenschen* to the Nazis, is a mainstay of imperialist subjugation—reinforcing the view of the capitalist masters that they are meant to rule over the poor, dirty masses. Former secretary of state John Foster Dulles expressed this mindset: "There are two kinds of people in the world. There are those who are Christians and support free enterprise, and there are others."

In response to the recent report, Cheney pronounced, "I'd do it again in a minute," while denying that the practices outlined in it constituted torture on the grounds that the victims were not Americans. In reality, the U.S. rulers have wielded torture against not only dark-skinned people around the world, but also leftists and minorities at home, particularly black people. When not presiding over torture themselves, the self-proclaimed leaders of the free world have shared their techniques with their blood-soaked client regimes, especially in Latin America.

State Repression and Bourgeois Democracy

The capitalist politicians behind the Senate committee report are trying to refurbish the image of U.S. imperialism in order to better prosecute the "war on terror," which both the Democrats and Republicans have fully backed from the first. That so-called war has served as a pretext for imperialist depredations abroad and a wholesale assault on civil liberties at home. The release of the report was held up for two years as the committee, the CIA and the White House sought to balance releasing enough information to be credible against not revealing anything too damaging. After all, Commander-in-Chief Obama, just like any U.S. president, needs the likes of the CIA to do imperialism's dirty work.

The facade that is bourgeois democracy, not least the lie that the government

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Honor Rosa Luxemburg!

From *Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg*
by Max Shachtman

"Today the bourgeoisie and the social-traitors are jubilating in Berlin—they have succeeded in murdering Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Ebert and Scheidemann, who for four years led the workers to the slaughter for the sake of depredation, have now assumed the role of butchers of the proletarian leaders. The example of the German revolution proves that 'democracy' is only a camouflage for bourgeois robbery and the most savage violence.

"Death to the butchers!"

—"Speech at a Protest Rally Following the Murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg," 19 January 1919

This was Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin's cry of rage after the assassination of two revered Marxist leaders of the German proletariat. They were murdered by the fascistic Freikorps at the behest of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) government of Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann as it moved to crush the unfolding workers revolution in that country. German Social Democracy had proved its rottenness on 4 August 1914, when SPD deputies in parliament voted to fund the German military in World War I. Against the social-traitors Ebert & Co., Liebknecht and Luxemburg fought for revolutionary proletarian internationalism. In the tradition of the early Communist International, every January we honor the memory of these revolutionary fighters, the "Three Ls"—Luxemburg, Liebknecht and Lenin himself, who died on 21 January 1924.

The appreciation of Luxemburg reprinted below comes from the undated pamphlet *Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg* published by the Young Workers (Communist) League of America sometime between 1924 and 1928. The pamphlet's author, Max Shachtman, was expelled in 1928 from the U.S. Communist Party for supporting the Left Opposition led internationally by Leon Trotsky. The Trotskyists fought down the line against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state and the Communist International. Although Shachtman would break from Trotskyism during World War II and eventually become an open supporter of U.S. imperialism, he was for a time a revolutionary leader and talented proponent of Marxism.

The excerpt below erroneously states that Berlin police chief Emil Eichhorn was removed from office a year after the founding of the German Communist Party. In fact, it was only a few days later, as the article on the facing page lays out in greater detail.

August 4, 1914. The world was astounded by the social democratic vote on war credits. But Rosa wasted not a moment. Declaring the social democracy a whited sepulchre, a foul corpse, she grouped around herself the cream of the revolutionary wing of the old party. With her came Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches, Franz Mehring, Wilhelm Pieck, Clara Zetkin, [Ernst] Meyer and others. A small band they were, but immediately they proceeded to their task. Illegal literature was spread at every opportunity. Flaming appeals against the imperialist war were the order of the day. Rosa Luxemburg, who had written her famous open letter to [French social democrat] Jean Jaures six years before, arguing against his declaration that the alliance between France, England and Russia was a step towards peace, was being confronted by the truth of her own prophetic words.

Dietz Verlag

Revolutionary Marxist leader Rosa Luxemburg denounces German imperialism at 1907 rally.

The workers were beginning to come out of the stupor resulting from the first shock at the socialist betrayal. Within six months the small handful of revolutionists had grown to greater proportions despite its illegality and the hindrances in its way. In February of the year following the declaration of war, representatives from many cities gathered to found the group of "The International." To combine legal with illegal work they proposed to issue a magazine with the name of their group at its head and with Red Rosa as its editor. This brilliant organ was declared illegal after the publication of the first number.

And now the sentence against Rosa for her Frankfurt speech [in 1914 against the imperialist war] was confirmed and she was once more imprisoned for a year. Surrounded by stone and iron she continued to carry on her agitation as though she were free. With the cooperation of the faithful Leo Tyszka [Jogiches], her oldest friend and co-worker, she issued numbers of Die Internationale, which stands today as the official theoretical organ of the party she founded, the German Communist Party, a monument to her work. From prison, also, she wrote her famous pamphlet, "The Crisis in the German Social Democracy," which became known far and wide as the Junius brochure, since she was unable to sign her own name to it and was therefore obliged to use the pseudonym Junius.

"Shamed, dishonored, wading in blood and dripping with filth, thus capitalist society stands. Not as we usually see it, playing the roles of peace and righteousness, of order, of philosophy, of ethics—as a roaring beast, as an orgy of anarchy, as a pestilential breath, devastating culture and humanity—so it appears in all its hideous nakedness. And in the midst of this orgy a world tragedy has occured: the capitulation of the social democracy.... It forgot all its principles, its pledges, the decision of international congresses, just at the moment when they should have found their application."

Bitterly did she scourge the social democratic traitors; scornfully she lashed to tatters their false arguments of national defense; and skilfully she exposed the imperialist roots of the war. Yet here also she relied too greatly upon the spontaneous action of the masses. Unlike Lenin she did not raise the inspiring slogan: Turn the imperialist war into a civil war of the proletariat against its oppressors! And Lenin, while greeting joyously this noble revolutionary voice crying in the sterile desert of shameless betrayal, did not fail to criticize this omission in his own book, "Against the Stream," which he collected together with other articles written by Zinoviev.

Against the stream! "It is never easy to swim against the current, and when the stream rushes on with the rapidity and the power of a Niagara it does not become easier!" said the older Liebknecht [Karl's father Wilhelm]. And yet Rosa swam bravely with her comrades against the streams of blood which were being shed in the imperialist slaughter. Released from prison just before Liebknecht's arrest [for speaking against the war in 1916] at the famous May Day demonstration, she was soon rearrested to be released only by the first revolution in Germany [in November 1918]. Again there flowed from prison a constant stream of propaganda from her fertile pen. From her prison cell were written the famous Spartacus Letters. There also she replied to the critics of her "Accumulation of Capital" which had been published before the war, in which she attempted to set forth a Marxist theory of imperialist political economy. From that cell, too, came the letters to the wife of Karl Liebknecht which portrayed the sensitive and lovable soul of this uncompromising rebel, her love for life and struggle. There also her pamphlet on the Russian revolution, unfortunately composed on the basis of misinformation, the errors of which she later partially corrected, and which was triumphantly published by the renegade Paul Levi [after his departure from the Communist Party] who attempted to use it to justify his own cowardice and to attack the first working class republic.

"This madness will not stop, and this bloody nightmare of hell will not cease until the workers of Germany, of France, of Russia and of England will wake up out of their drunken sleep; will clasp each other's hands in brotherhood and will drown the bestial chorus of war agitators and the hoarse cry of capitalist hyenas with the mighty cry of labor, 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!'"

Thus had she ended her Junius brochure. And when the German revolution followed the successful uprising in Russia she was freed, together with Liebknecht, again to take up her incessant struggle for the workers' cause. With new hopes the two Spartacans renewed their labors to build up a Communist Party in Germany. Battle-scarred, undaunted, they proceeded to unite the revolutionary forces of Germany: the Spartakusbund and the revolutionary groups of Hamburg and Bremen which were led by Paul Frölich, [Johann] Knief, and Karl Radek. At the end of the year of 1918 the first congress of the Communist Party of Germany was completed. The party was as yet weak; it was dominated by leftist elements. Despite the opposition of Rosa and Karl, the congress voted to oppose participation in elections or parliaments of any kind, as well as for the boycotting of the trade unions and appeals to the workers to leave them. Rosa argued, with little avail. Yet, in the program she wrote and which was adopted by the congress, the aims of the young Communist movement are clearly stated:

"The proletarian revolution is the deathbed of slavery and oppression. For this reason all capitalists, Junkers [landed

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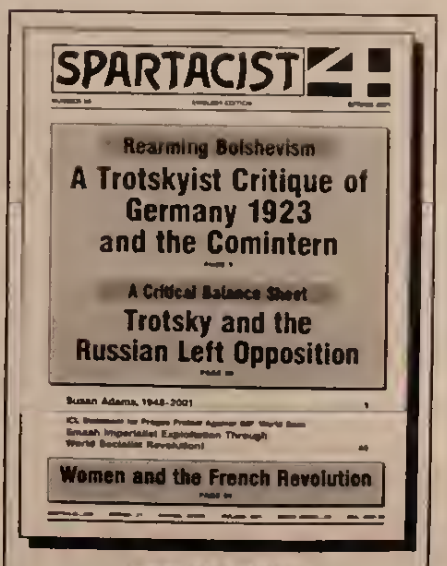

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No. 1060 **23 January 2015**

A Correction to Our *Militant Labour* Pamphlet

The Police and the 1918-19 German Revolution

With the military defeat of Kaiser Wilhelm II's forces in November 1918, which ended World War I, the German capitalist order was deeply shaken. A revolutionary wave swept the country, triggered by a mutiny of sailors in Kiel, who sent emissaries around Germany rousing the working masses and calling on them to set up workers councils. The German proletariat drew inspiration from the example of the Russian October Revolution a year earlier, in which the working class, led by Lenin's Bolshevik party, took power, sweeping away the tsarist autocracy and the capitalist class.

The Kaiser's forced abdication, which was engineered by Prince Max of Baden to head off revolution, resulted in the reins of the government being entrusted to the Social Democratic Party (SPD), whose leaders had proved themselves outright class traitors through their ardent support of the German side in the imperialist war. With the outbreak of the November Revolution, society was precariously balanced between the nascent workers councils and the capitalist government headed by the Social Democrats. This situation of dual power posed sharply the issue of which class would rule: the workers or the bourgeoisie.

The SPD was given invaluable aid in its counterrevolutionary efforts by the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), which joined the SPD government the day after it took over. Dominated by centrists like Karl Kautsky who longed to reunite with the mother party, the USPD was the main political obstacle to proletarian revolution. In the absence of an authoritative communist party, it had the allegiance of tens of thousands of militant workers.

For courageously opposing the war, Spartacist leaders Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, Leo Jogiches and Franz Mehring spent substantial time in the Kaiser's prisons. Although fiercely combating the SPD's wartime orgy of social patriotism, they lingered inside the Social Democracy. The Spartacists exited the SPD in 1917, only when they along with the centrists were pushed out. And even then the Spartacists embedded themselves in the USPD, not leaving to form the Communist Party (KPD) until the very end of December 1918.

Despite the great authority of Liebknecht and Luxemburg as revolutionary leaders, the KPD was unknown to the working masses when street fighting broke out a few days after its founding. The party had a total of at most a few thousand members, who were centered in Berlin with small, virtually autonomous groups scattered across the country. A revolutionary leadership is forged, tested and honed through intervention in struggle. Lacking such experience, the young KPD was faced with the daunting task of cohering an organization while simultaneously navigating a revolutionary situation. (For historical background and documents, see John Riddell, ed., *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power* [Anchor Foundation, 1986].)

The January Events

After the SPD took the helm of the government, Emil Eichhorn, a member of the left wing of the USPD, became the Berlin chief of police, acting on the false view that this arm of the bourgeois state could be transformed into a revolutionary instrument. On 4 January 1919, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior dismissed Eichhorn in a deliberate provocation. A January 5 edition of the KPD paper, *Die Rote Fahne*, called for a protest for the following day against Eichhorn's sacking. The statement was also signed by the USPD and the Revolutionary Shop Stewards (RSS), a group of radical trade unionists based in the factories that was politically associated with the USPD.

Willy Römer

Armed workers and soldiers occupy Berlin newspaper district in January 1919.

The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of thousands of angry workers, many armed, flooded the center of Berlin, burning for action. But no one took command. That evening, representatives of the USPD, RSS and KPD, intoxicated by the outpouring and counting on support from some troop regiments and sailors, issued a proclamation. It announced that the SPD government of Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann was deposed and that power was provisionally in the hands of a "Revolutionary Committee" (RC) consisting of representatives of all three groups, among them Liebknecht.

The next morning, the workers again stormed into the streets, expecting to be led into battle. But again there was no leadership. The anticipated troops did not materialize to bolster their ranks. The masses embarked on spontaneous street fighting and armed occupations, including of the offices of *Vorwärts*, newspaper of the despised SPD.

In reality, the USPD—which had only quit the government after the SPD launched a bloody assault on the leftist sailors of the People's Naval Division on December 24—had no intention of overthrowing the regime of its recent collaborators. Pathetically, the majority of the RC voted to negotiate with the same SPD government they had announced they were overthrowing two days earlier! The KPD rightly denounced this move, finally announcing its withdrawal from the RC on January 10.

But the government had been given precious time to organize a counteroffensive. SPD leader Gustav Noske was appointed

continued on page 5

Letter

On the BT's National Chauvinism

We reprint below a contribution from a sympathizer of the Spartacist League. As regards last year's Scottish referendum, the ICL defended the democratic right of the Scots to decide their national fate, but did not advocate a "yes" or a "no" vote on independence.

9 December 2014

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

The "Bolshevik" Tendency has produced a pitiful attempt of a polemic against the ICL/SL position on the Scottish referendum which overwhelmingly focuses on "demonstrating" that the SL has a "Scottish exceptionalist" line, purportedly because founding Spartacist James Robertson is of Scottish descent.

Their "evidence" is hilariously absurd and shows the BT is incapable of recognizing contradictions, often relayed in the Spartacist press via humor. Robertson himself commented once that he'd heen raised in the left socialist and Jewish traditions of the Shachtman organization where one's main political/polemical thrust was often associated with humor as a way of stressing contradictions.

Robertson once remarked, "A scoundrel can have a sense of humor; but the lack of one may lead to methodological problems—an understanding of contradiction is as necessary to a sense of humor as it is to dialectics." This proved prescient because he was writing in response to the resignation of a rightist, social-democratic member from the SL/B. This ex-member raised in his resignation his opposition to the SL's line on a Scottish Workers Republic as part of the USSR. Robertson responded:

> "Last and not necessarily least. 'Scottish Workers Republic as part of the USSR!': conceived as a heuristic lever to pry apart the Scots Nats and infuriate English reformists (and as the expression of a not very likely revolutionary variant), it hit real pay dirt. Don's hatred for the idea is almost as extreme as that expressed in print by the all-purpose sundry English workerist left sell-out artist bully boy, Alan Thornett. Q.E.D."

That this line prompted a similar bleat of outrage from the BT only further condemns them. What else really needs be said about a group whose various national units have always, *always* come out against the exercising of self-determination by oppressed nationalities in countries where they have sections? Their British group opposes Scottish independence and softpeddles the issue of British troops out of Northern Ireland in the presence of reformists like the Socialist Party. Their Canadian group prides itself for opposing Quebec's independence. Their German group opposed and ridiculed the struggle for Kurdish independence in a country where Kurdish nationalists are victimized and jailed by the German imperialists. Their polemic against the ICL's support for Kurdish independence was originally titled "With Love from Absurdistan!" Their U.S. group has never dealt with Puerto Rican self-determination—the only time it is even *mentioned* by them is in the context of arguments with the SL about the national question in *other* locations.

When it comes to the struggle against racial oppression, they are worse than Debsian. Their U.S. group displayed a policy of open scorn to SL-led mobilizations in defense of blacks against fascist terror in the 1980s (the Daniel Patrick Moynihans of the left) and their New Zealand group barely ever mentions the Maori.

Where they *have* chosen to make a big stand on the issue of national rights and self-determination today is the Chinese deformed workers state, located right in the crosshairs of U.S. imperialism. The BT calls for a "revolutionary government in China" that "would signal its willingness to coexist with Tibet's traditional ruling caste and Xinjiang's mullahs as long as they retain popular support."

Before that the BT loudly proclaimed the right of Albanian-populated Kosovo to self-determination and called for military support to the Kosovo Liberation Army in March 1999... after NATO began its war on Serbia in the name of "poor little Kosovo" with the KLA being blatantly militarily and politically subordinated to NATO imperialism. The BT only backed off this position a month later, claiming that the relationship between NATO and the KLA changed with the KLA becoming "decisively" subordinated to imperialism. The BT claimed, "This relationship is a product of the crushing military setbacks suffered by the KLA on the one hand, and the failure of Nato's air strikes to deliver a quick and painless victory on the other." So if only the imperialists had been more effective in destroying Serbia, the KLA wouldn't have had to subordinate itself to the imperialists!

I will hazard a guess that when the BT finally gets around to writing about the imperialists' war against the Islamic State, they will discover the need to support the Kurdish struggle against ISIS, despite the Kurdish forces operating under the direction, and in the assistance, of U.S. imperialism. I suppose once the imperialists give their blessing the BT will eagerly offer their support for "Absurdistan."

That's really about all that needs to be said about the BT's position on the National Question.

Comradely greetings,
Jonah

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Luxemburg...

(continued from page 2)

> nobility], members of the petty middle class, officers, and all those who live on exploitation and class hegemony, will rise against it to a man in a struggle for life and death. It is madness to believe that the capitalist class will, with good will, subordinate itself to the verdict of a socialist majority in parliament; and that it will voluntarily renounce its proprietary rights and its privileges of exploitation. Every ruling class has, to the very end, fought for its privileges with the most stubborn energy. The class of capitalist imperialists exceeds all its predecessors in undisguised cynicism, brutality, and meanness.... Against the threatening danger of the counter-revolution must come the arming of the workers and the disarming of the hitherto ruling class. The fight for socialism is the most gigantic civil war in history, and the proletarian revolution must prepare the necessary defense for this war. It must learn to use it, to fight and to conquer. This defence of the compact masses of the workers, this arming of them with the full political power for the accomplishment of the revolution, is what is known as the dictatorship of the proletariat. This, and only this, is the true democracy."

The young party was soon to receive its baptism in blood. The social democrats were placed at the head of the so-called revolutionary government to head off the real revolution which would place power actually into the hands of the working class. Traitorous, they quaked at the idea of a proletarian revolution. Growing up by their side, like the Soviets alongside of the decaying Russian Constituent Assembly, were the Workmen's Councils and the Communist Party. The social democrats did not hesitate to choose between revolution and suppression of revolutionary forces. A year after the founding of the Communist Party, the Workmen's Councils were maliciously provoked by the social democratic government which removed the popular police president of Berlin, Emil Eichhorn, a member of the Independent Socialist Party. Rosa knew that the situation was not yet developed for an uprising. She realized that the masses had not yet been rallied to the support of the Communist Party; that they had not, in the words of the program she had written, gained "the consent of the clear, unanimous will of the majority of the proletarian masses of Germany and... conscious agreement with the aims and methods of the Spartakusbund." But less clear heads prevailed and instantly the battle was on.

V.K. Bulla

July 1920, Petrograd: Lenin addresses crowd during dedication of monument to Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and heroes of Paris Commune.

Together with a group of independent socialists, the Communists seized the building of the social democratic Vorwärts [newspaper] and issued a manifesto deposing the national government. Barricades were thrown up overnight. Workers armed themselves and prepared to give battle. Red Rosa did not hesitate. Marx, before her, had disapproved of the action of the revolutionaries of Paris in proclaiming the Commune [in 1870]; but as soon as the revolt was on he placed himself in line with the rebels—uncompromisingly; and after their terrible defeat he wrote the most brilliant declaration in its defense that the world has yet seen. And Rosa, in the same dilemma of being obliged to take a position in favor of an action which had been taken against her best judgment, showed the same revolutionary spirit as Karl Marx.

Süddeutscher Verlag

Karl Liebknecht (second from left) while serving in German army, was later imprisoned for opposing imperialist World War I.

Unhesitatingly, the young party threw itself into the battle. With historic heroism they fought the troops of the social democrat [Gustav] Noske. With sabers and machine guns their proletarian lives were cut down to the ground. Rosa led in the battles. Liebknecht was everywhere, in the front ranks, among the youth who defended buildings that were being held by the Spartacans, in the barricades, indefatigably working among the inexperienced troops, giving encouragement and good cheer to all.

A general strike is declared; the factories stand gaunt and silent. The Berliner Tageblatt [newspaper] is taken over by the Berlin youth; the paper rolls are used for barricades, the books of the concern to bolster up the windows; a Red Cross station is established and guards are placed. On a number of churches, machine guns are lashed to command the streets. In front of the Vorwärts building a huge bonfire of the social democratic leaflets which have insulted the working class. The Bötzow brewery is held by the armed workers.

The government marshalls its forces: social democratic workers who have been poisoned against the revolutionaries. Workers against workers.

Saturday sees the end of the brave battle. The Vorwärts building is surrounded and surrendered. Whoever is caught with arms is forthwith shot. A sixteen year old fighter is called upon to shout "Long live the republic!"; he shouts instead "Long live Liebknecht!"; he is killed. The historic January days are over. They have seen heroic sacrifice and base betrayal.

A short few days pass. Liebknecht and Luxemburg are discovered. They are taken to the Eden Hotel, the headquarters of the troopers. Karl is spirited away and murdered by these "heroes." As Rosa is leaving the hotel entrance, the trooper Runge is standing at the door. Commander Petri has given the order that she is not to reach the prison alive. The obliging Runge strikes her heavily on the head twice, so heavily that the blows are heard in the lobby of the hotel. Rosa sinks to the ground. She is lifted and thrown into the vehicle, one man on each side of her and Lieutenant Vogel in the rear. As the truck drives off, a soldier springs up from behind and delivers another sharp blow to the unconscious martyr; Lieutenant Vogel levels his revolver and shoots her in the back of the head; the frail, broken body quivers for the last time. They drive between the Landwehr Canal and the Zoological Gardens. No one is in sight. At the exit of the gardens near the canal, a group of soldiers are standing. The auto halts and the corpse is heaved into the canal at the order of Lieutenant Vogel. A few days later the watersoaked body is recovered and interred by the side of Liebknecht. The assassinated Jogiches finds his resting place by their side a short time later.

The social democratic Vorwärts has very humorous writers of jingles. On the eve of the murders they publish a little song:

> "Five hundred corpses in a row,
> Liebknecht, Rosa, Radek & Co.:
> Are they not there also?"

The workers mourn and plan their vengeance. The murderers walk the streets today: they are free men.

* * *

It is said that were Red Rosa living today she would be among the best leaders of the iron regiments of the powerful Communist Party of Germany. Of that there can be little doubt. The attempts of renegades and unscrupulous scoundrels to darken the sacred memory of Rosa Luxemburg by spreading the tale that she opposed the Russian revolution and the Russian Bolsheviks have already been brought to nought. Rosa had many shortcomings. Perhaps only in her last days did she begin to understand that her attitude towards the question of the peasantry was incorrect. In the question of the attitude of revolutionaries towards national independence and the right of self-determination to the point of separation she also held the wrong position. She erred in certain respects in her estimation of the Russian party conflicts, and later in her understanding of the Bolshevik revolution and its tactics. She was wrong in her book "The Accumulation of Capital" and unconsciously, in fighting so vigorously for the principles of Marxism against the opportunist revisionists, herself deviated from those basic economic principles. She had too much confidence in the spontaneous action of the masses irrespective of preparatory organizational work and of the leading role of the party.

And yet she will remain a cherished, beloved memory; yet her spirit will continue to be embodied in the world's revolutionary movement; yet her name will continue to grow in the hearts of the masses for whom she fought when those who betrayed her will have cheated oblivion only by obloquy.

The Paul Levis who seek to capitalize her errors and forget her glorious history of revolutionary struggle have best been answered by Lenin, who often took issue with Red Rosa, but who appreciated her work as few men do:

> "An eagle may descend lower than a chicken, but the chicken can never rise like an eagle. Rosa Luxemburg was mistaken on the question of the independence of Poland, she was mistaken in 1903 in her estimate of the Mensheviki; she was mistaken in her theory of the accumulation of capital; she was mistaken in defending the union of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1914 along with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky and others; she was mistaken in her prison writings in 1918 (on coming out of prison, however, at the end of 1918, she corrected a large number of these mistakes herself). But notwithstanding all her mistakes she was and remains an eagle; and not only will her memory always be highly esteemed by the Communists of all the world, but her biography and the complete collection of her writings will be useful for the instruction of many generations of Communists in all countries. As for the German social democrats after the 4th of August, 1914,—'a foul corpse' is the appellation which Rosa Luxemburg gave them, and with which their name will go down in the history of the international labor movement. But in the backyard of the labor movement, among the manure piles, chickens like Paul Levi, Scheidemann, Kautsky and all that fraternity, will be especially enraptured by the mistakes of the great Communist."

Rosa Luxemburg died like the bravest soldier of the revolution at his post. She died after the defeat of a revolution, after "order" had been established. The last words she is known to have written are her best epitaph:

> "Order reigns in Berlin! You senseless thugs! Your 'order' is built on sand. The Revolution will rise tomorrow, hristling to the heights, and will to your terror sound forth the trumpet call: 'I was, I am, I am to be!'"

These words are the muted song of the grim regiments of the proletariat who march in the final struggle and for the final victory. ■

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Correction...

(continued from page 3)

commander-in-chief in the Berlin area. Declaring that "one of us must he the hloodhound," Noske helped to prepare the Freikorps, fascistic volunteer battalions recruited by right-wing officers and financed hy industrialists. The Freikorps, as well as a few regiments in the disintegrating army that remained loyal to the government, swept through the streets, smashing the insurgent workers and killing many of the best worker militants.

It didn't end there. A particular target was the KPD leadership. With a state of siege having been declared, Noske posted proclamations slandering the Spartacists as looters—to be shot on sight. *Vorwärts* explicitly fingered Liebknecht and Luxemburg. On January 15, the Freikorps, acting at the behest of the SPD, murdered them. The assassination of Leo Jogiches followed several weeks later. By eliminating the best leaders of the KPD, the SPD delivered a crippling blow to the revolutionary workers movement in Germany. It also dashed immediate hopes, not least in the fragile Soviet workers state, of extending the Russian Revolution internationally.

Correcting Our Error

In the 1994 Spartacist pamphlet *Militant Labour's Touching Foith in the Capitalist State*, we wrongly stated:

> "Eichhorn was not a bourgeois cop, and neither were the core of his forces. In a situation of revolutionary turmoil, Eichhorn and his militia sought to ***replace*** the existing bourgeois police force and regarded themselves as accountable to the workers councils and the left, not to the capitalist government."

It may have been the delusion of Eichhorn (and the workers) that he could simply "replace the existing bourgeois police force," but we do not share this view. It contradicts the entire thrust of our pamphlet, which refutes the falsehood purveyed by reformist socialists then and now (among them successors of the Militant tendency—Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International and Ted Grant's Workers International League) that cops are "workers in uniform." The socialist pretenders sometimes cite the Eichhorn affair to emphasize their point.

The reality proves the very opposite. Many of the Kaiser's police dropped their weapons and fled when Eichhorn took over, but the majority ***returned to work*** after Eichhorn appealed to them to do so. He did recruit a couple thousand "socialist" cops in late December to a new security guard (the *Sicherheitswehr*) assigned to patrol the streets alongside the old police. But the *Sicherheitswehr* abandoned Eichhorn in the midst of the tumultuous battles over his dismissal, having been bribed with promises of monetary reward and fearing the prospect of a face-off with pro-government army troops (see Hsi-huey Liang, *The Berlin Police Force in the Weimar Republic* [University of California, 1970]).

The history of Eichhorn's police highlights Leon Trotsky's assessment in *What Next?* (1932) that "the worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker." Trotsky continued: "Every policeman knows that though governments may change, the police remain," which perfectly describes the 1918-19 events in Berlin.

Bundesarchiv

Social Democratic war minister Gustav Noske reviews counterrevolutionary Freikorps, January 1919.

Last December, the ICL's International Executive Committee voted to correct the error in the pamphlet, noting:

> "The Spartacists' break with the Social Democracy had been partial, notably on the question of the state, as shown by their continued defense of Eichhorn as police president. We would not have called for Eichhorn's reinstatement. We would have defended the workers in the fleeting uprising in January 1919 against the SPD drive to crush the workers and soldiers councils and disarm the proletariat, while fighting to win the workers to the understanding that the capitalist state is an instrument of bourgeois repression that must be smashed."

On 4 January 1919, the KPD's *Die Rote Fahne* wrote: "The police force was trying to be a revolutionary police force, rather than actively or passively serving the counterrevolution," thus reinforcing in the working class the widespread misconception that Eichhorn and his cops could be the guarantors of the revolution. This is wrong. What should have been said was that in a capitalist government run by the SPD at the behest of counterrevolution, the police force ***had*** to serve counterrevolution.

Reichstags-Handbücher

Emil Eichhorn

The German Spartacists had the duty to defend the masses who took to the streets to protest Eichhorn's ouster. At the same time, the outpouring indicated that the workers regarded a USPD police chief as a gain of the Revolution. If one could simply take over the existing organs of the bourgeois state, then there is no reason for the workers to forge their own insurrectionary force, a workers militia, to sweep away that state.

This fatal illusion helped determine the course of events in January 1919. The workers, many of whom were armed, were not organized to struggle for power. Once this became evident, even the military units most sympathetic to the Revolution, such as the People's Naval Division, vacillated. The door was opened for the counterrevolution to go on the offensive.

As V.I. Lenin explained in *The Stote and Revolution* (1917), the state is "an organ of class ***rule***, an organ for the ***oppression*** of one class by another." Polemicizing against Kautsky in that work, he wrote: "If the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms...the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, ***but also without the destruction*** of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class." Although the Spartacists were well acquainted with Lenin's book, they had not yet sloughed off all the old social-democratic baggage when they came face-to-face with revolution.

Eichhorn's "socialist" police force had zero connection to socialism because the working class had not seized power, instituted a workers government and smashed the capitalist state. Under capitalism, police cannot be "reformed" nor can citizens "police" them to make them act in the interests of the exploited and oppressed. Along with the courts and the prisons, the cops have a job to do—to protect and defend private property and the capitalist system itself.

For Revolutionary Leadership

Although the January workers insurrection is dubbed the "Spartakist Uprising," the KPD neither anticipated nor led it. Rather, the new party was swept up in the mass revolt. Liebknecht in particular got caught up in the dithering USPD-controlled Revolutionary Committee. One version of events has it that when he returned from the meeting where the proclamation "deposing" the government was signed, Luxemburg reproached him: "Karl, is *that* our program?"

Over the years, socialists had deeply adapted to the strictures of the state under the Kaiser. For example, a law passed in 1853 required all political meetings to have in attendance a police agent, who could terminate the meeting at will. The socialists accommodated to it, changing their language and their work to suit the law. While any organization would have to take into account the law, part of the necessary response was to create an underground organization, which the SPD and its direct predecessors failed to do.

In contrast, the Bolsheviks had developed their faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party separately from the reformist Mensheviks. By 1917, the Bolsheviks had through years of struggle forged a programmatically and organizationally cohesive cadre, as well as their own underground apparatus. Within a few weeks of the outbreak of the war, Lenin had resolved to split with the social-democratic Second International and to fight for a new, revolutionary international.

The Spartacists fought against the war on an internationalist basis, but their failure to appreciate the yawning gulf between revolution and opportunism meant they remained within the Social Democracy. As Lenin later put it in "A Letter to German Communists" (August 1921): "When the crisis broke out, however, the German workers lacked a genuine revolutionary party, owing to the fact that the split was brought about too late, and owing to the burden of the accursed tradition of 'unity' with capital's corrupt (the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids and Co.) and spineless (the Kautskys, Hilferdings and Co.) gang of lackeys."

From the first days of the November Revolution, the SPD vilified "Spartacus," picturing them in *Vorwärts* as rapists and arsonists and Luxemburg as a wild, bloodthirsty beast. But despite the tightening of the noose, Luxemburg, Liebknecht and Jogiches remained in Berlin. Still holding that the necessary organization and consciousness would spring from the masses themselves and failing to appreciate the indispensability of leadership, they did not get out of the line of fire when they had the chance. This was very different from Lenin, who retreated to Finland when counterrevolutionary forces temporarily gained the ascendancy in Russia in July 1917.

Germany in 1918-19 cried out for a steeled revolutionary party like the Bolsheviks, one based on the absolute independence of the working class from the capitalist state. When the workers rise up in revolutionary struggle against capitalist rule, they must have their own bodies of self-defense and their own organs of rule, under the leadership of communists. In the heat of events, the KPD leadership was moving closer to this Leninist understanding, but too late. The bloody tragedy in January 1919 underscores the danger of placing confidence in the possibility of taking hold of the bourgeois state to advance working-class interests, illusions that can prove fatal to revolution. ■

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CIA Torture...

(continued from page 1)

is responsible to the people, disguises the brutality at the core of capitalist class rule. Witness Feinstein, who is prancing around with a halo as a supposed defender of civil liberties. The Senator has helped push through the massive expansion of the repressive powers of the state under the "war on terror" and howled for the heads of those like Julian Assange and Edward Snowden who exposed some of the imperialists' crimes. Leading Congressional Democrats, including then-House speaker Nancy Pelosi, were briefed on the CIA's "enhanced interrogation techniques" as early as 2002.

A former White House official told the *New York Times* (26 December 2014): "Many presidents tend to be smitten with the instruments of the intelligence community. I think Obama was more smitten than most," adding, "this has been an intelligence presidency in a way we haven't seen maybe since Eisenhower." Such a reference may seem bizarre to liberals who like to quote Eisenhower's warnings against the growth of the "military industrial complex." Like Obama today, Eisenhower fretted over military quagmires costing American lives and dollars. So he vastly expanded covert activity, authorizing the CIA to engineer the overthrow of left-nationalist governments, beginning with Iran in 1953 and Guatemala in 1954, with many more to follow. His efforts to undo the Cuban Revolution included a proposal for the U.S. government to carry out murderous acts of sabotage within the U.S. and blame them on Cuba as a pretext for war.

For his part, Obama, who never wanted the Senate investigation, has an anti-terror strategy that he presents as more compatible with the trappings of bourgeois democracy than that of his predecessor: pervasive snooping by the National Security Agency (NSA) and its ilk coupled with the CIA's take-no-prisoners drone attacks, which have killed thousands, including many women and children. Torture isn't by any means off Obama's menu, though, as the 122 people still held in Guantánamo could attest.

Many liberals feel that the lack of any prosecutions weakens the effort to clean up the CIA's image. Thus, the headline of a *New York Times* (21 December 2014) editorial calls to "Prosecute Torturers and Their Bosses" (by which its editors did not mean Bush). Since 2009, before his first inauguration, Obama has made clear that he did not intend to subject the torture carried out under Bush to official scrutiny, offering: "We need to look forward as opposed to looking backwards." Shortly after taking office, he promised CIA officers that none of them would ever be prosecuted and, indeed, a Justice Department review of the torture program found no reason to indict anyone. In response to the Senate report, Obama declared that "a profound debt of gratitude" is owed to "the dedicated men and women of our intelligence community, including the Central Intelligence Agency."

We are all for those responsible for torture getting their just deserts, while recognizing that such savagery is endemic to this system of exploitation and oppression. Justice for the innumerable victims of imperialist terror will only come when the working class has overthrown capitalist rule, sweeping aside the capitalist state apparatus and establishing a workers state. Reformist socialists pretend otherwise, sowing illusions in the possibility of a kinder, gentler imperialism, if only enough pressure is applied to Democratic Party politicians.

One such group, the Workers World Party, cites the Senate's 1975-76 Church Committee as an example of the "struggle to restrain the CIA" (workers.org, 13 December 2014). Coming in the wake of the Watergate affair and the tumultuous social struggles of the 1960s and early '70s, the Church Committee was set up to contain outrage sparked by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh's revelations that the CIA was not only destabilizing foreign governments, but also spying on thousands of Americans. Committee hearings exposed the FBI/CIA's repeated efforts to assassinate Cuba's Fidel Castro and other foreign leaders as well as the campaign of spying on anti-war and civil rights activists.

In the end, the Church Committee covered up more than it revealed and led to the implementation of toothless "reforms": Congressional "oversight" committees that have rubber stamped all the CIA's machinations and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which has given legal sanction to massive CIA/NSA wiretapping and surveillance. A rare dose of reality emerged from the Church Committee hearings when James Angleton, the CIA's former chief of counterintelligence, said, "It is inconceivable that a secret intelligence arm of the government has to comply with all the overt orders of the government."

Imperialism in Decline

"It's disappointing that even the secret shadow government can't get anything done."

Paul Noth

The Long History of American Torture

Far from an aberration, torture has been a commonplace of modern capitalist society: the Belgians in the Congo, the British in Kenya and Northern Ireland, the French in Algeria, the now-ubiquitous "war on terror." The U.S.—a society originating with the genocide of the indigenous population and built on the systematic oppression of black people from chattel slavery to today's wage slavery—has its own long history of torture.

After seizing the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico as colonies from Spain in 1898, U.S. troops killed up to half a million Filipinos to suppress a nationalist uprising. Colonel Jacob Smith (who a decade earlier participated in the massacre of Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee) declared to his troops: "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn. The more you kill and the more you burn, the better you will please me." Those who were taken prisoner were subjected to hideous torture. The most notorious was the "water cure," in which bamboo tubes were forced down prisoners' throats and dirty water pumped into their stomachs. Soldiers then jumped on their abdomens until the individual either "informed" or died.

While Washington was consolidating the country's status as an imperialist power abroad, there was an epidemic of lynching at home. An average of two black people were lynched every week as Jim Crow segregation became the law of the land in the South. In addition to lynch mobs, there was the state's legal lynching—the death penalty—often based on false confessions extracted with threats of the gun or the noose. But even the Mississippi Supreme Court in 1926 ruled that confessions obtained through waterboarding, "a specie of torture well known to the bench and bar of the country," had crossed a line that mandated overturning a murder conviction.

Most of the world knows of the Nazi torture machine in the 1930s and '40s. Kept hidden are the horrendous practices of the imperialist democracies at the time, including during the occupation of Germany after World War II. The Americans, along with the British, had set up Direct Interrogation Centers purportedly to uncover Nazi war criminals, but with the Cold War beginning they shortly turned to gathering intelligence on the Soviet Union. Anyone who had contact with the Soviet Zone could wind up in an interrogation center, where they were stripped naked, beaten, forced to stand for hours and deprived of sleep, mirroring the tortures described in the recent Senate report.

Bettmann

January 1968: U.S. soldiers and interpreter waterboard suspected Communist during Vietnam War.

As Giles MacDonogh records in his book *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation* (2007):

> "The Americans had used methods similar to those employed by the SS in Dachau. One of these was keeping the prisoner for long periods in solitary confinement.... Worse still were the mock executions, where the men were led off in hoods, while their guards told them they were approaching the gallows. Prisoners were actually lifted bodily off the ground to convince them they were about to swing."

Many were kept imprisoned solely for having too much firsthand knowledge of the tortures to which they were subjected. Most of those held in American prisoner-of-war camps were German army conscripts drawn from the working masses, while former Nazi intelligence agents of the Gehlen organization were incorporated into the CIA.

CIA-organized torture was a weapon in U.S. imperialism's efforts to overthrow the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers states, not least its attempted rollback of the social revolution in Vietnam. The CIA's Phoenix program, begun in 1967, set up torture centers in every district of that country. In 1970, two U.S. Congressmen went to Vietnam, finding tens of thousands of prisoners held in underground "tiger cages." Then-Congressman Tom Harkin described, "There were as many as five people in an airless pit.... Many are forced to drink their own urine. Most of the men could not stand up, their legs having been paralyzed by beatings and by being shackled to a bar about one or two feet off the floor."

In that same period, the cops and FBI tortured black militants in the U.S. One example was the effort to get Black Panthers to confess to the 1971 killing of San Francisco police officer John Young. During several days of interrogation in 1973, three Panther members were stripped, blindfolded and beaten, covered with blankets soaked in boiling water, shocked with electric cattle prods on their genitals and anuses. Even though the charges were thrown out in 1975 on the basis that their confessions had been coerced through torture, the vendetta against the former Panthers framed up for the killing of the cop continued until 2011.

Today, tortures such as isolation and sensory deprivation are a daily reality for the thousands of inmates—overwhelmingly black and Latino—in the solitary confinement Special Housing Units (SHU) of America's prisons. The High Security Units in the Lexington, Kentucky, women's prison were a prototype for the SHUs. Those units were designed to hold leftist political activists as part of Ronald Reagan's "war on terror," launched in 1986. Among the women locked up in them were leftists Susan Rosenberg and Silvia Baraldini as well as Alejandrina Torres, a supporter of the Puerto Rican-nationalist FALN.

The prisoner held the longest in solitary confinement in this country is Albert Woodfox. He has been in solitary since 1972, framed up with another Black Panther for the killing of a prison guard. Woodfox is kept in a closet-size, windowless cell 23 hours per day. He eats all his meals alone and has no access to the prison's educational or religious activities. Even though he is under constant supervision and is shackled whenever he is moved, he is subjected to visual body cavity searches up to six times a day. Woodfox's conviction has repeatedly been overturned, most recently this past November, but his conditions remain unchanged.

Socialist Revolution Will End Imperialist Barbarism

While torture is an intrinsic part of the armory of repression of capitalist states everywhere, another type of society is possible, the model for which issued out of the Russian October Revolution of 1917. Led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, that revolution made the working class the rulers of society for the first time in history. The Soviet workers state was a fundamentally different state than any capitalist state. It defended not the interests of a tiny exploiting minority but of the vast majority of society—the working masses of the proletariat and poor peasantry. As part of their liberating program, the Bolsheviks repudiated dehumanizing barbarities like torture, even while using

Hail Edward Snowden!

Citizenfour: A Review

By A. Stevens

What compels a person to take action on his own and at great personal risk against the most deadly government on earth? Why does a so-called democracy spy on its own citizens, foreign nationals and even allied heads of state? *Citizenfour* is the story of Edward Snowden, a former private contractor for the National Security Agency (NSA) and the CIA who disclosed details of how the U.S. government, in cahoots with the largest telecommunications and internet service companies, spies on virtually everyone, everywhere. Those disclosures revealed Big Brother's spy apparatus to be far greater than previously known.

Snowden used the alias "Citizenfour" to make contact with Laura Poitras, a writer and filmmaker who for years has tenaciously exposed U.S. surveillance activities. For her courageous truth-telling, Poitras earned a spot on a government watch list. *Citizenfour* is the third part of her trilogy about how the world has changed since September 11, 2001 under the endless U.S. "war on terror."

David Miranda

Edward Snowden (left), with David Miranda, Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras.

Snowden's story, which captured the front pages of newspapers across the globe in 2013, is well known. Yet it is riveting to watch it unfold in real time, with Poitras behind the camera as Snowden gives his account to journalists Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill in a Hong Kong hotel room. The film also provokes the disturbing recognition that people feel so powerless in the face of relentless government overreach that Snowden's exposure of the NSA, which caused a tremendous stir just over a year ago, is now met with little more than a collective shrug of resignation. Worse yet is the acquiescence, expressed in the often-heard line: "If you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear." Tell that to the legions of fighters against class and race inequality in this country whose lives have been wrecked or snuffed out through government surveillance and repression.

Surveillance is a weapon in the arsenal of state repression. *Citizenfour* reveals that there are 1.2 million people on U.S. watch lists. The small city of Dearborn, Michigan, (population 96,000) has the largest percentage of Arab Americans and Muslim Americans per capita and has thus been racially profiled by law enforcement as the number two place in the country where suspected terrorists reside.

In the aftermath of the cold-blooded killing of black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, where another white cop walked away with a pat on the back, it's important to recognize the connection between surveillance and racial and political profiling. Protesters against racist American injustice need to be aware that fighters for social change in this country are put on one or another government watch list. And in a nation founded on black chattel slavery, a special place is reserved for fighters for racial equality and opponents of capitalist class rule. As James Baldwin wrote in *The Fire Next Time* (1962): "People find it very difficult to act on what they know. To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger."

Capitalist Decay and Attacks on the Right to Privacy

The "war on terror" has been a pretext for unfettered force and violence by the American ruling class abroad and at home, from the wars and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq to the shredding of the civil liberties of the U.S. population. In Washington's "anti-terror" crusade, national security is the trump card to quash democratic rights. First the Republican Bush administration and then the Democrat Barack Obama seized on the September 11, 2001 attacks to institutionalize extraordinary government powers and snooping through such measures as the USA Patriot Act. These are merely the top shelf of an entire arsenal of repressive legislation that includes the 1917 Espionage Act, which has always been used to criminalize dissent and repress labor and leftist opposition to the U.S. government during wartime. Among its first and most prominent victims was Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs, jailed for his political speech and agitation against the capitalist slaughter of World War I.

Snowden is threatened with prosecution under the Espionage Act if he were to return to the U.S. from temporary asylum in Russia. Chelsea Manning, who was tortured and now languishes in Leavenworth Prison, was sentenced to 35 years under the Espionage Act. Manning was gone after for letting the world see irrefutable government evidence, documented in its own military logs and diplomatic cables, of heinous U.S. war crimes as well as the everyday depredations of imperialist domination. Snowden was inspired by Manning's outstanding courage to step forward with his own gigantic trove of information. Curiously, Manning is not mentioned in Poitras's film, yet it is crucial to link all current struggles for justice with the fight to free victims of government repression. Julian Assange, who published Manning's material on WikiLeaks, is threatened with U.S. prosecution and remains ensconced in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. We demand: ***Free Chelsea Manning! Hands off Edward Snowden! Hands off Julian Assange!***

The film does show tantalizing evidence of yet another insider with a conscience, who was inspired by Snowden to leak new evidence of U.S. government dirty tricks to Glenn Greenwald. The U.S. government has created its own security nightmare, as disillusioned idealistic servants bite back like the multiheaded Hydra and lift the veil on government secrecy.

In the salad days of its struggle against the yoke of the British monarchy's colonial rule, the American bourgeoisie fought for the right to privacy and enshrined it as the Fourth Amendment in the original 1791 Bill of Rights. This legal protection against unreasonable searches and seizures by the government grew out of English common law, which enjoined the police or other forces of the Crown from entering a private home without an official writ. This protection was effectively nullified in the American colonies, where royal magistrates and judges routinely issued writs and warrants to allow British soldiers to ransack private homes and seize property without so much as a suspicion of crime.

The legitimization of black chattel slavery in the U.S. Constitution bespeaks the limited, conservative goals of the bourgeois-democratic American Revolution. Nonetheless, the so-called "founding fathers," leaders from a period when the bourgeoisie was historically progressive, would be outlaws today in the period of advanced capitalist decay. America's rulers would appear to them as King George loyalists and traitors to their own revolution and citizenry. The U.S. government has long served as the gendarme for reaction worldwide and backed the bloodiest regimes on the planet. The silver-tongued Obama intones "freedom" while shredding democratic rights at home, prosecuting more whistleblowers than all prior presidents combined and directly authorizing assassinations of U.S. citizens abroad.

It's Gonna Take a Revolution

Glenn Greenwald's latest book, *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State* (New York: Henry Holt, 2014), is a good read in conjunction with viewing Poitras's *Citizenfour*. The same conversations with Snowden that Poitras captured on film are related in greater detail in Greenwald's book. Poitras and Greenwald have both moved to other countries to continue their work at greater distance from vindictive and threatening American authorities. Poitras has been

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all means necessary to ensure victory in the civil war against Russian counterrevolutionaries and the 14 capitalist powers that sent troops to overthrow the workers government.

Temporary and drastic measures were required to defeat counterrevolution. For that purpose, the early Soviet workers state established the Cheka (Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counterrevolution and Sabotage). The Cheka's methods reflected the proletarian morality of the Soviet power. In 1918, Cheka head Felix Dzerzhinsky issued the following instructions:

> "Let all those who are assigned to conduct searches, take people into custody, and imprison them behave solicitously toward those being arrested or searched. Let them be much more courteous even than toward close friends. Let them remember that the incarcerated cannot defend themselves and that they are in our power. Each and every one must remember that they represent Soviet power, the workers' and peasants' government, and that any verbal abuse, rudeness, injustice, or impropriety is a blot upon the Soviet power."

When a small Moscow journal, *Cheka Weekly*, published a letter calling for the use of torture, the Cheka responded, "The proletariat is merciless in its struggle. At the same time it is unshakable and strong. Not a single curse at our most wicked enemies. No tortures and torments!" The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the highest governmental body, passed a decree: "The Soviet regime fundamentally rejects the measures advocated in the indicated article, as despicable, dangerous, and contrary to the interests of the struggle for Communism" (quoted in Roy A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge* [1972]). The *Cheka Weekly* was closed down, and the authors of the letter dismissed and forbidden to hold office in the Soviet republic.

sovietpostcard.blogspot.com

Felix Dzerzhinsky (center) with other Cheka members, September 1919. Cheka (Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counterrevolution and Sabotage) was founded in 1917 to defend fledgling Soviet workers state.

The economic backwardness of Russia, the decimation of the advanced layers of the proletariat during the civil war and the failure to extend the revolution internationally allowed a bureaucratic caste headed by J.V. Stalin to usurp political power from the proletariat in 1923-24. Under the Stalinist regime, all the old "tortures and torments" denounced by the early Soviet government were revived. Despite its Stalinist degeneration, the Soviet Union remained a workers state, based on proletarian property forms, until its final undoing through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

We stand in the tradition of the liberating goals of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks. Our aim is to win revolutionary-minded youth and proletarian fighters to the necessity of building revolutionary parties, in the U.S. and internationally, to lead the working class to power. Only then will mankind be able put an end to torture, repression and imperialist war and develop a society of abundance, where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. ■

Citizenfour...

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detained and had her notes and electronics seized more than 40 times at U.S. airports. Some of Greenwald's colleagues in the capitalist media howled for him to be prosecuted because he dared print what the government sought to keep under wraps. In a gratuitously vicious move to torment Greenwald, the British authorities, in league with the U.S., detained and terrorized his partner and political collaborator, David Miranda, when he ferried documents from Poitras to Greenwald through London's Heathrow airport.

Edward Snowden was compelled by his conscience to risk everything he had in life by taking a stand against omnipresent U.S. government surveillance because he thinks people have a right to know what the government is doing and a right to debate and change policy. In this, Snowden shares a moral and political compass with Chelsea Manning. We hail their courageous acts. Despite Manning's and Snowden's self-identification as U.S. patriots, their disclosures provide a factual basis for Marxists like us to help working people see through the stupefying fog of patriotism and democracy that is peddled by the bourgeoisie to dull the wits of those they exploit. It is going to take more than leaks and whistles to fundamentally change society. An essential precondition is the understanding that the government is not "ours," nor can it be made into a neutral arbiter. Rather, it is part of the machine to maintain capitalist class rule, suitably disguised as an expression and tool of "the people."

Glenn Greenwald expresses the views held by many libertarians, liberals and reformist leftists that the problem with the encroaching police state is simply that it is wildly out of control. Greenwald argues, "The alternative to mass surveillance is not the complete elimination of surveillance. It is, instead, targeted surveillance, aimed only at those for whom there is substantial evidence to believe they are engaged in real wrongdoing." Asking capitalism's secret police to play nice is like asking a great white shark to chew softly.

In capitalist society, where a tiny minority of the population lives off the labor of the working class, the rulers will always resort to spying, lying and violence to keep the vast majority down. Anything that challenges property rights and the racial, ethnic, religious and moral prejudices that prop up this whole capitalist system of exploitation and injustice constitutes "wrongdoing." The liberals are blinded by lofty words like "freedom" and "democracy"—classless terms that snooker working people into believing they have equal rights in an increasingly unequal society. Any talk of achieving freedom that does not involve a struggle for the abolition of classes is simply a lie.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained the fundamental difference in purpose between petty-bourgeois democrats and communists in their 1850 "Address of the Central Authority to the [Communist] League." Against a backdrop of the failed German bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848, in which the bourgeoisie had gone over to the side of the old reactionary classes against the revolutionary proletariat, Marx and Engels observed:

> "Far from desiring to transform the whole of society for the revolutionary proletarians, the democratic petty bourgeois strive for a change in social conditions by means of which the existing society will be made as tolerable and comfortable as possible for them....
>
> "While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible...it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians in these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of the existing society but the foundation of a new one." ■

Demotix

London protest calling for Chelsea Manning's freedom, December 2013.

France...

(continued from page 1)

assassination of eight people since the early 1990s, were carried out in the name of biblical injunction. Of course, such anti-woman violence does not count as religious extremism in a country where Christian fundamentalists wield substantial political influence.

We print below a translation of a January 17 statement issued by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France. It refers to Vigipirate, a massive mobilization of the French police and military to sow terror in minority neighborhoods and to patrol transportation hubs hunting for supposed terror suspects.

* * *

The criminal attacks in Paris carried out by Islamic fundamentalists against the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and during a hostage situation in a kosher supermarket at Porte de Vincennes—civilians selected and killed in a store because they were Jewish—are horrific acts that we categorically condemn. But this does not stop us from also vigorously opposing the cynical campaign of "national unity" fueled by the capitalist government to promote its "war on terrorism" and reinforce the police and military apparatus of French imperialism. We oppose the Vigipirate security plan and the climate of war created by the bourgeois propaganda machine. We are also opposed to all measures that strengthen the arsenal of police repression as well as the new "anti-terrorist" military adventures that have already been announced or are being prepared. The calls for the "unity" of classes, supported by the misleaders of the trade-union federations, serve only to bind the working class and the oppressed to their oppressors. ***Down with Vigipirate!***

This "national unity" campaign will continue to fuel an anti-Muslim pogromist atmosphere throughout the country and strengthen the rise of the fascists of [the National Front's Marine] Le Pen and her ilk. In the days following the attack against *Charlie Hebdo*, a series of attacks took place against the Muslim community in a dozen cities across France—gunshots, grenades, graffiti desecrations and pigs' heads left at the doors of mosques. In this sense, the Paris terrorist attacks are also a blow against the Muslim population, which was already in the crosshairs of the capitalist state.

Corbis

Reuters

"National unity" rally in Paris, January 11. Right: French president François Hollande and German chancellor Angela Merkel. Above: Communist Party banner invokes France's "republican values," cover for racist French imperialism.

The January 11 demonstration in Paris, organized by the SP government, was an obscene expression of imperialist arrogance and hypocrisy. There one could see the heads of capitalist states who are among the most brutal and barbaric criminals in the world today, from [Germany's Angela] Merkel and [Britain's David] Cameron to Israeli prime minister Netanyahu. And taking center stage was Hollande, who pursues a savage domestic policy of austerity and attacks against the working class and expels Roma and other immigrants by the thousands. Hollande is the leader of French imperialism, which has a history of over 100 years of oppression and the massacre of millions of colonized subjects. Recently, it has conducted murderous interventions in Iraq, Libya, the Central African Republic and Mali.

The repeated military interventions by France and other imperialist powers, with their legacy of destruction and massacres, have played a direct role in the rise of Islamists in the Near East—and in France itself. From North Africa to the Levant, the French bourgeoisie and its successive governments carry on today, as do other imperialist powers including the U.S. and Great Britain, a policy that dates back to colonial times. They plunder the natural resources and retard the economic development of their former colonies, and they have reduced entire regions to a pile of rubble while stoking deadly ethnic and religious divisions.

The National Assembly has just decided in an almost-unanimous vote to extend France's military commitment in Iraq against ISIS. The imperialists have never had the slightest qualms about supporting such reactionary forces when they feel this can serve their sordid interests. For three years, the French in particular supported the "Syrian revolution," even as the number of reactionary jihadists was steadily increasing. Now the French rulers have cynically turned against the monster they themselves helped to create.

It is the imperialists who are responsible for the bloody chaos into which this region has been plunged. They are the worst enemies of humanity, and any blow to the imperialist forces and their foot soldiers, even on the part of forces as repugnant as ISIS, would thus serve the interests of the international working class. Marxists place themselves militarily on the side of ISIS against imperialism, without giving the least political support to these reactionaries, who are our resolute enemies. ***Down with American and French imperialist intervention in Iraq! French troops out of the Near East and Africa!***

The capitalist rulers have seized upon the Vincennes atrocity in order to posture as defenders of the Jews. What hypocrisy! The sordid history of the French bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the Jews includes the Dreyfus affair as well as the deportation of over 75,000 Jews—men, women, children and the elderly—to the Nazi death camps.

Since 2012, when Mohamed Merah killed three Jewish schoolchildren and their teacher, there has been a sharp increase in the number of Jews emigrating from France. The bourgeoisie has seized on that attack to pass off the entire population of the immigrant suburbs as repugnant anti-Semites, while supporting the terrorist actions of the Israeli state against the Palestinians. All of this is used by fundamentalist preachers and fascistic scum like Dieudonné/Soral, who seek to whip up reactionary anti-Jewish prejudices in the suburbs by identifying all Jews with the murderous Zionist rulers.

Of all the European countries, France has the largest population of Jews and Muslims. The French bourgeoisie uses the policy of "divide and rule" in order to benefit from the conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Near East as well as to sow divisions within the working class here in France between its various components—those of so-called "French origin," Jews, those of North African or Sub-Saharan African origin. The workers movement must defend Jews, Muslims, homosexuals, women and all the oppressed against attacks by reactionaries and fascists as well as against the offensive of the capitalist state.

The Paris demonstration was awash with "I Am Charlie" placards. The attack against *Charlie Hebdo* was a despicable criminal act. However, we are not "Charlie." Since 11 September 2001, *Charlie Hebdo* has carved out a niche for itself in the Islamophobic bourgeois press. In a context of growing racist campaigns against the population of North African and African origin, and in the guise of the fight against Islamic fundamentalism, *Charlie Hebdo* has regularly published anti-Muslim cartoons and articles. The front page of the issue published on the day of the murders promoted the latest racist and Islamophobic rant of writer Michel Houellebecq. *Charlie Hebdo* also provocatively published the racist Danish cartoons in 2006, including the one in which the turban of the prophet Mohammed covered a bomb. We denounced these cartoons, which serve only to encourage attacks by the state and the fascists against the oppressed. [See "Racist Anti-Muslim Cartoons Spark Fundamentalist Frenzy," *WV* No. 864, 17 February 2006.]

While the French bourgeoisie and its government hail the right of free speech for Islamophobic provocations, this right is

Greece...

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like lawyers, doctors, professors, etc.—a layer with no independent class interests, which under capitalism is generally drawn behind the interests of the bourgeoisie. Syriza's mild anti-austerity rhetoric and left-sounding stances on some social questions may make the bourgeoisie scream about their supposed radicalism. And the EU imperialists and Greek capitalists are clearly worried that Syriza cannot be trusted to impose EU-dictated austerity. But Syriza's class character is nonetheless bourgeois. This makes it unprincipled for revolutionary Marxists to give it any form of political support.

The reformist Antarsya has no such principles and even though it claims to oppose the EU, it cannot bring itself to call explicitly for a vote against Syriza. Antarsya complains that the KKE "turn their fire more toward the militant left forces instead of the government and the system" ("ANTARSYA statement for the elections of 25/1"). Given that the KKE's polemical fire is overwhelmingly aimed at Syriza, this amounts to an attack on the KKE from the right in defense of Syriza. *No vote to Antarsya!* In contrast to the rest of the reformist left, the KKE opposes any kind of political support to Syriza and has continued to reject its overtures to form a coalition in order to bring a "left" capitalist government to power.

The International Communist League has stood in principled opposition to the imperialist EU and the euro from the beginning. The EU's purpose is to enable the imperialist powers of Europe, led by Germany, to subordinate weaker capitalist countries like Greece and impose savage austerity on working people throughout Europe, including in Germany. The EU, IMF and local capitalists have devastated the living standards of the masses in Greece, Portugal, Spain and other countries and continue to demand more vicious cuts and the total overturn of trade union rights. Working people are thus made to pay the debts racked up by the capitalists and their bloodsucking banks. *There is no way forward for the workers and the oppressed within the capitalist EU!*

The reformist KKE correctly says: "Out of the EU, cancel the debt" and "Reject the blackmail and lies of ND-Syriza, the people have bled enough for the EU-plutocracy." As we did in our campaign of critical support in 2012, we call for a vote to the KKE while sharply criticizing their political program of nationalist populism, which is an obstacle to the consciousness the working class needs in order to carry out a successful socialist revolution.

A Greek exit from the EU as a result of militant workers struggle would be an important step forward, but not a solution in itself. The crisis in Greece is part of a world economic crisis of the imperialist system, which cannot be resolved within the borders of any single country, particularly within small, dependent Greece with its low level of industry and resources. The only way forward is a series of socialist revolutions that will expropriate the bourgeoisies, including in the imperialist centers, and establish an internationally collectivized, planned economy under workers rule. For a Socialist United States of Europe!

But the KKE's leaders posit that Greece can achieve "socialism" without an international extension of workers revolution, a Stalinist distortion of Marxism. They also call for "people's power," dissolving the proletariat, which uniquely has the social power to overthrow capitalism, into the "people." This obscures that the central class division in capitalist society is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and not between the "people" and the "monopolies." The KKE embraces Greek nationalism, as shown by their defense of capitalist Greece's borders. To prove their patriotism they are running as an election candidate Giannis Douniadakis, a retired Greek naval officer who served in defense posts for the Greek government. This bona fide representative of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state also served in NATO, which makes a mockery of the KKE's opposition to this imperialist alliance. *We say: No vote to Douniadakis!*

Greek nationalism, based on the pillars of the Orthodox church, the institution of the family and the military, is the poison used by the fascist Golden Dawn to win support among the ruined petty-bourgeoisie and to deflect its anger toward immigrants, leftists, gay people and trade unionists. The KKE leadership has remained criminally passive in response to fascist attacks on its party and others. Despite the KKE's social weight in the trade unions, it has no perspective of taking the lead in mobilizing contingents of workers, based on the unions, to defend immigrants, leftists and gay people and sweep the fascists off the streets. The working class cannot defend itself against the capitalist crisis if it does not take up this urgent struggle. The fascists' ultimate goal is the destruction of the unions and the left, which is why the capitalists keep them in reserve. *For mass, workers united-front mobilizations to stop the fascists!*

Trotskyist Group of Greece

Piraeus, January 11: Crowd waves Communist Party (KKE) flags together with Greek national flags during rally for party's 96th anniversary.

Workers must not believe that the fascists can be stopped through the jailing of some Golden Dawn leaders and other legal measures by the state against them. Such measures serve to repress the left as well. No capitalist government, even a "left" one under Syriza, will be able to satisfy the desperate demands of the masses for jobs, healthcare and pensions. In these conditions, the fascists will continue to grow. It is necessary for the working class to come to the fore in militant struggle to defend all those ruined by the capitalist crisis. A class-struggle response to the populist demagogy of the fascists is needed: Organize the unorganized! Unions must defend immigrant workers—for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! For jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! For a sliding scale of wages to keep up with the cost of living! Repudiate the debt! Nationalize the banks!

This struggle would point to the need for the working class to completely expropriate the bourgeoisie and establish its own government through socialist revolution. But this is not the perspective of the KKE leadership who might currently refuse a coalition government with Syriza, but are not opposed to administering the capitalist state. In fact, a KKE mayor currently administers the capitalist state on the local level in Patras, just as Syriza's bourgeois prefect administers Attica. Nor has the KKE fundamentally broken with the program that led them to join bourgeois governments in the past, as explained at length in our article "Greece 1940s: A Revolution Betrayed" [in *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 64, Summer 2014, see the ad below to order, or read it on the ICL website at www.icl-fi.org].

We take Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party as our model for the kind of revolutionary party that needs to be forged here and internationally in counterposition to the reformist programs of both the Stalinist KKE and the rest of the Greek left. *For new October Revolutions!* ■

Reuters

Women gather for food handouts, Athens, April 2014. European Union-imposed economic austerity has devastated working people, unemployed.

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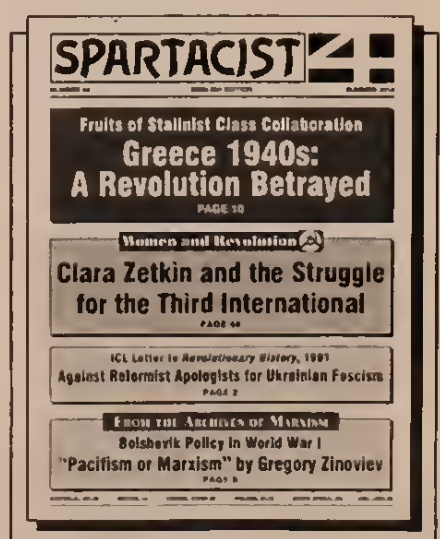
denied to anyone who expresses an opinion—even in a private conversation or on Facebook—that does not coincide with the government's "republican values." Indeed, under the Cazeneuve law that was passed in November, they can be thrown in jail. Two hundred public-school students were identified for not observing the January 8 national minute of silence as well as for other acts; about 40 of them were reported to the police. More than 70 people have been arrested so far, including the anti-Jewish demagogue Dieudonné, for "apology for acts of terrorism," simply for having expressed an opinion. In Lille, three civil service workers are threatened with being fired for not observing the minute of silence. Hearings and trials have been sped up and several people have already been convicted—one was sentenced to four years in prison. The accused can be hit with heavy fines and up to five years in prison for a verbal offense and up to seven years if an offending text is posted on the Internet. *We demond that these charges be dropped! Free those who have been jailed!*

In the aftermath of the attacks, [Prime Minister Manuel] Valls is preparing to further beef up the already enormous police powers introduced over the past few years, allowing the state, among other things, to continue to siphon data from the Internet (now in all legality). Already, 10,500 soldiers and over 100,000 gendarmes and police have been deployed. Countless demonstrators on Sunday [January 11] applauded the cops. But the cops are the guardians of capital; their role is to protect the racist capitalist order. They are enemies of the working class and the oppressed. They persecute dark-skinned youth, round up undocumented workers and help the bosses break strikes. They are at the core of the state, which defends the capitalist ruling class, as shown for example in the police assassination of several hundred Algerian workers in Paris on 17 October 1961.

Islam in France is a minority religion in a country in which the bourgeoisie and its culture remain fundamentally Catholic. As Marxists, we are resolutely for the separation of the reactionary Catholic church and the state. That is what secularism is, but today in France it has become a code word used to stigmatize Islam.

The appearance in French cities of murderous Islamic fundamentalists, from Merah to Nemmouche and today the Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulihaly, is a direct product of the segregation and alienation of millions of people, French second-class citizens who are victims of unrelenting racist discrimination. The influence of Islamic fundamentalism developed in the ghettos following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 and the many betrayals committed for decades by the chauvinist leaders of the workers movement. Notably, the leaders of the organized workers movement refused to defend dark-skinned youth during the 2005 revolt in the suburbs, which was a desperate reaction to increasing daily racist terror and unemployment.

Against the "national unity" campaign, we Marxists say that only the organized working class, conscious of its historical role in liberating the oppressed masses, is able to put an end to the domination of the capitalist class and its state. The working class can advance the struggle against capitalist exploitation only through uncompromising defense of the oppressed and democratic rights, and in opposition to all imperialist atrocities committed by "its" capitalist ruling class, at home and abroad. Our task is to build a revolutionary proletarian party based on the Marxist understanding that the whole rotten capitalist system must be overthrown through workers revolution. ■



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Selma...

(continued from page 12)

challenges an older black woman to name every county judge in the state, and when she cannot, sneeringly stamps "denied" on her application. King announced that his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) would make the town the center of its own voter registration campaign.

As we wrote at the time in "Conspiracy and Treachery in Alahama" (*Spartacist* No. 4, May-June 1965, reprinted in *WV* No. 1051, 5 September 2014):

> "From the beginning the black voter registration campaign in the South was an assertion of potential independence—directed against the underlying social system as well as the segregationist political apparatus which helps maintain it. Revolutionary in implication because it involved organizing masses of black workers and share-croppers in struggle, the mass character of the movement poses a dangerous threat to the American ruling class and its politicians. Hence they use every means at their disposal to derail the movement—including sending in such kept leaders as Martin Luther King—to head it off and deliver it to the Democratic Party where the job of beheading and neutralizing it can be finished off."

While lionizing King, *Selma* makes clear that MLK aimed to use the blood of black civil rights foot soldiers to pressure the capitalist ruling class to grant those demands its liberal wing was willing to concede. *Selma* portrays King lecturing SNCC militants: "What we do is negotiate, demonstrate, resist. And a big part of

Muhammad Speaks

Cartoon from *Muhammad Speaks* captures cringing pacifism of Martin Luther King.

that is raising white consciousness, and in particular the consciousness of whichever white man happens to be sitting in the Oval Office." King's strategy of nonviolent resistance was in fact a pledge of allegiance to the white power structure.

When King was jailed in early February, Selma exploded with protest marches, and over a thousand protesters were arrested. After the murder of 26-year-old protester Jimmie Lee Jackson by a trooper, the SCLC called for a protest march from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery. On March 7, a day subsequently known as "Bloody Sunday," 2,000 marchers were stopped on the Pettus Bridge by a phalanx of state troopers and deputies, who attacked them with clubs, bullwhips and tear gas, driving them back through the city streets.

The film's crisis point comes with the second attempt at the march to Montgomery three days later. At the bridge, again faced with a horde of state troopers, King gets everyone on their knees to pray, and then suddenly stands and turns the marchers back. In the movie, King's decision to turn around is shown as a response to a directive from God. In reality, the directive had come from the federal government. As recounted in Clayborne Carson's *In Struggle* (1981), the Feds worked out a secret deal with MLK that if he turned back the marchers, the state troopers would not attack them. The film shows that SNCC members were bitter at King's reversal. Indeed, SNCC activists began openly talking of King as a coward and sellout. Instead of "We Shall Overcome," the young militants sang "We Shall Overrun."

Selma's portrayal of Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson as a recalcitrant racist who orchestrated FBI wiretapping of King has elicited a howl from liberal commentators. Former Johnson aides and historians point out that Johnson and King actually collaborated closely. In fact, the film captures LBJ's attitude toward MLK when the president is depicted telling FBI director J. Edgar Hoover: "If he's a degenerate, what I do know is he's a nonviolent degenerate and I want him to go on leading the civil rights movement, not one of these bloodthirsty militants." The Texas Dixiecrat Johnson's catering to racists (which he did) and his administration's spying on King (which it did) did not preclude the White House from collaborating with MLK.

As CEO of U.S. imperialism, Johnson was carrying out the will of a section of the American capitalist ruling class, which had its own reasons for acquiescing to the dismantlement of Jim Crow. With the mechanization of agriculture, which largely displaced sharecropping, and the increased urbanization of the black population, the system of legal segregation that had been consolidated to enforce the powerlessness of the black rural poor was rendered obsolete. Jim Crow also exposed the hypocrisy of the U.S. imperialists, who were extolling the supposed virtues of American democracy as part of their Cold War drive against the Soviet Union.

The tempo of the Selma events made it necessary for LBJ to offer some kind of voting rights law. The culmination of the film is the third, final march to Montgomery, portrayed as a brilliant success. We wrote at the time, "The march acquired the character of an 'official' parade directly launched from Washington, with a corps of food and latrine trucks, doctors and nurses, swarms of politicians, etc., and Federal troops standing guard along the route." As the film shows, the march was a sea of American flags waved by an integrated crowd. It amounted to a support rally for LBJ and the Democrats.

SNCC: Breaking with Nonviolence and the Democrats

What *Selma* disappears is that by 1965 a whole layer of SNCC militants were rejecting King's liberal pacifist, pro-Democratic

AP

North Carolina, May 1965: Klan parades with murderers of Viola Liuzzo, civil rights activist killed hours after Selma-to-Montgomery march.

Party pressure politics. Far from being a transcendent leader of a unified movement, as *Selma* portrays, King was one of the political poles against which the left wing of the civil rights movement was defined.

Outrageously, the film slanders SNCC activists, particularly James Forman, as arrogant, petulant opponents of the Selma protests whose main interest was defending their own turf against the SCLC; and King wins every argument with them. In reality, the differences between King and the SNCC activists were over burning political issues, such as reliance on the Democrats and the federal government, along with the question of armed self-defense. (See "SNCC: 'Black Power' and the Democrats," reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 2, 1985.)

When SNCC was formed in 1960, it was a constituent part of the Southern black liberal establishment, the youth group of what W.E.B. Du Bois had termed the "talented tenth." But through bitter experience, SNCC had been radicalized by its grassroots organizing of poor black sharecroppers, which repeatedly brought it into direct conflict not just with the Dixiecrats, but the whole racist, capitalist state.

The film alludes to the 1961-62 protests in Albany, Georgia, where SNCC activists were already becoming disenchanted with King. When civil rights protesters were getting arrested by the hundreds in late 1961, King intoned: "Don't get weary, children. We will wear them down by our capacity to suffer." The next summer, black youth fought back with bricks and bottles when cops attacked a rally outside a black church. King declared a "day of penance" for the "violence." SNCC, though, refused to condemn the protesters. In Albany, many SNCC members began to refer to MLK privately and derisively as "De Lawd." This epithet is slipped into the movie so fleetingly that those unfamiliar with the history would not even notice it.

Selma was bracketed by the uprisings in Harlem in 1964 and Watts in 1965, which had a profound impact on SNCC militants. It was now clear that the "turn the other cheek" pacifist ethos was losing its resonance for increasing numbers of the embittered urban black masses. In response to Watts, King declared, "It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them [the ghetto masses]." King's defense of cop terror to smash the ghetto explosions was the ultimate proof of what his one-sided "nonviolence" was about.

Up to that point, the young SNCC militants broadly accepted nonviolence. Now many asked themselves how nonviolence and voter registration could answer the oppression of Northern ghetto blacks. After "Watts had exploded in August, 1965," Forman later wrote, "could we still call ourselves 'nonviolent' and remain in the vanguard of black militancy? If we were revolutionaries, what was it that we sought to overthrow?" (*The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 1972).

It was SNCC activists who invited Malcolm X to Selma to speak after King's arrest. In keeping with today's liberal myth that King and Malcolm X were moving toward a meeting of the minds, the movie falsely portrays Malcolm X apologizing to Coretta Scott King for his criticisms of her husband. That apology never happened (nor was Malcolm ever the mealy-mouthed wimp shown on screen). In fact, Malcolm bitterly opposed King's kowtowing, and that never changed. Around the same time, after a fascist punched King in a Selma hotel lobby, Malcolm fired off a telegram to Nazi *führer* George Lincoln Rockwell:

> "This is to warn you that I am no longer held in check from fighting white supremacists by Elijah Muhammad's separatist Black Muslim movement, and that if your present racist agitation against our people there in Alabama causes physical harm to Reverend King or any other black Americans who are only attempting to enjoy their rights as free human beings, that you and your Ku Klux Klan friends will be met with maximum physical retaliation from those of us who are not hand-cuffed by the disarming philosophy of nonviolence, and who believe in asserting our right of self-defense—by any means necessary."

After the Selma protests, in April 1965 Stokely Carmichael and other SNCC activists stayed on to work in neighboring Lowndes County. There they organized an independent political party, taking a snarling black panther as its symbol, which soon came to be called the Black Panther Party. Although narrowly based on a single impoverished rural county, the Panthers were important because they were organized in ***opposition*** to the Democratic Party. As Carmichael said, it was "as ludicrous for Negroes to join [the Democratic Party] as it would have been for Jews to join the Nazi party in the 1930s." Local residents agreed. One recalled, "SNCC mentioned about the third party and we decided we would do it, because it didn't make sense for us to go join the Democratic party when they were the people who had done the killing in the county and had beat our heads." Although *Selma* deals with numerous capitalist politicians, it doesn't mention what party they were in. Why? They were all Democrats: from LBJ to Governor George Wallace to the local Alabama segregationists—to MLK!

The Lowndes County Black Panther Party was also important for its open

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advocacy of armed self-defense, which was a burning necessity for the black movement in the South. In Monroe, North Carolina, beginning in 1959 local NAACP head Robert Williams' courageous battle against KKK terror (described in his 1962 book *Negroes with Guns*) became a beacon to black militants throughout the South. Indeed, Forman had visited Williams in 1961 just before the FBI hounded Williams into exile in Cuba. In Lowndes County, the SNCC activists were influenced by and defended the local black sharecroppers who owned guns and were willing to use them against racist attack. By 1965, the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense and Justice had spread to Alabama. Civil rights rallies in Lowndes County were often defended by these armed self-defense squads.

Class Power and Black Rights

Nonviolence versus armed self-defense was the way in which the question of reform versus revolution was posed in the civil rights movement. The emergence of a layer of radical black youth groping for an alternative to liberalism cried out for the intervention of Marxists to win them to a proletarian revolutionary perspective. In the early 1960s, the predecessor of the Spartacist League, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) within the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), advanced a program of revolutionary integrationism—the fight for the assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. This perspective, which was developed by veteran Trotskyist Richard Fraser, recognized that there can be no social revolution in this country without the united struggle of black and white workers led by a multiracial vanguard party, and there is nothing other than a workers revolution that can open the road to black freedom.

The RT fought for an active intervention into SNCC and other forces in the left wing of the civil rights movement, as a crucial opportunity for the crystallization of a black Trotskyist cadre. But the SWP majority refused to do so, covering its abstention with an opportunist "dual vanguardist" outlook that implicitly defined the SWP as a "white party" whose only contribution to the black struggle was to enthuse over "whatever the black people want." The RT was expelled from the SWP in 1963-64.

WV Photo

Washington, D.C., 1982: Thousands of protesters charge up Capitol Hill after stopping Klan march. SL-initiated united-front mobilization enlisted section of unions in South against KKK race terrorists.

At the time, the main body of the AFL-CIO union bureaucracy was headed by open Cold War crusaders, who had been installed in the red purges of the late 1940s and '50s. Another section of the union tops, epitomized by United Auto Workers head Walter Reuther, gave a labor gloss to MLK's pressure politics. Both these wings of the labor bureaucracy were anti-Communist and openly hostile to labor and black militancy. The petty-bourgeois SNCC radicals, who were isolated from the mass of the black working class, equated the rotten politics of the labor bureaucrats with the union ranks. Without the intervention of Marxists, they had no concept at all of the power of the working class, much less the need to oust the bureaucrats to unleash that power.

In 1966, after his election as SNCC chairman, Carmichael raised the call for "black power" in a speech in Greenwood, Mississippi. Young black radicals picked up "black power" as the rallying cry against the preachers' sermonizing and the liberals' begging. It was a rejection of "faith in the system," a vow to take matters into their own hands.

In intersecting these militants, the SL, which had been founded in 1966, explained that the "black power" slogan was contradictory. It raised questions whose answers lay outside the framework set up by the capitalist class, but was not consciously anti-capitalist. The "black power" movement was premised on the view that black militants should organize black people and forget about whites. We warned in "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" (*Spartacist* No. 10, May-June 1967): "The slogan 'black power' must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the 'black power' movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party in the South."

We called for a "Freedom-Labor Party" as the axis to link the exploding black struggle to the power of labor, North and South. That call was coupled with a series of other transitional demands: a Southern organizing drive backed by organized labor; workers united fronts against federal intervention; organized, armed self-defense. But the SL was too small to reach and influence more than a very small number of radicalized black activists.

The hardening of the black/white line in the New Left radical movement sealed us off from subjectively revolutionary black militants of the period. SNCC had expelled all its white members by the end of 1966. Absent a Marxist working-class perspective, many of the best of the "black power" militants turned toward one or another form of black nationalism, a petty-bourgeois ideology that has always been unable to generate a program for struggle in this country. It is based on fiction, as American blacks are not a nation and have not aspired to separation except when prospects for united struggle seemed foreclosed.

The avowedly revolutionary and anti-capitalist Black Panther Party (BPP), founded in Oakland in 1966, crystallized the best of a generation of black militants. But despite their militancy and personal courage, the Panthers' nationalist program was disdainful of the multiracial working class. Instead, the Panthers looked to the lumpen ghetto masses. Their isolation from the proletariat left them especially vulnerable to government repression. The FBI's brutal COINTELPRO vendetta killed 38 BPP members and jailed hundreds more on frame-up charges. Within a few years, many leading Panthers would join moderate SNCC members back in the fold of the Democratic Party.

From Selma to Ferguson

The killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York have galvanized young anti-racist activists bitterly aware that six years after Obama's election the conditions of black America are as hellish as ever. When seven of them met with Obama on December 1, he issued the same advice the racist LBJ gave King: go slow. Some protesters have organized "die-ins" at showings of *Selma* to draw attention to their demands, and a series of "Reclaim MLK" events were held around MLK Day. The die-in demands, typical of other protests, are straight from the liberal playbook of appeals to the federal government: from "repurposing" law enforcement funding to demanding that the "Obama Administration develops, legislates and enacts a National Plan of Action for Racial Justice."

A host of reformist socialist groups today are pushing King's program of pressure politics. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) published a review (socialistworker.org, 15 January) hailing *Selma* as "magnificent" and crowing that the film shows "what he believed was needed to win: determination, courage, sacrifice." Like the movie, the ISO disappears the split that led black youth to reject King in favor of "black power," instead reducing these debates over fundamental questions to "how they together developed and honed their strategy and tactics"!

The reformists like to tout the "transformative" last year of King's life, when he supposedly was moving toward an "anti-capitalist" and "democratic socialist" perspective. His belated opposition to the Vietnam War in 1967 (at a time when a wing of the American bourgeoisie was also seeking to cut its losses) is cited as Exhibit A. In reality, King was explicit that with angry black youth and workers looking for a revolutionary solution to their own oppression, he was compelled to oppose that war to retain credibility. Far from reflecting a move toward anti-capitalism, King proclaimed that "the pursuit of peace" was "our greatest defense against Communism," and that poverty should be combated because it was "the fertile soil in which the seed of Communism grows and develops."

As we wrote ten years after King's assassination in "Bourgeoisie Celebrates King's Liberal Pacifism," reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 2):

> "We must break through the myths of 'passive resistance,' crack the mask of 'King the Peaceful Warrior,' and present a revolutionary analysis of the *failure* of the civil rights movement to provide a program for fighting the social and economic oppression of blacks under American capitalism.... While the reformists cover for King to camouflage their own treacherous tracks, the task of creating a black communist cadre requires destroying politically the exalted symbols of passive defeatism and reliance on the bourgeois state which led to the death of the civil rights movement."■

Phil Africa

On a Move

1956-2015

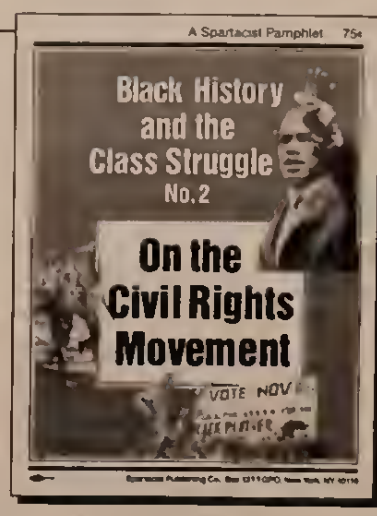
On January 10, MOVE member Phil Africa died at the State Correctional Institution in Dallas, Pennsylvania. Phil had been incarcerated since he was framed up, along with the rest of the MOVE 9, for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer during the 1978 cop siege of MOVE's Powelton Village home. Circumstances surrounding Phil's death remain murky. Only a week earlier, he was seen to be his usual vibrant and active self.

Phil was held in total isolation in the hospital for five days during which time his wife of 44 years, Janine, was denied the right to call him on the grounds they were not blood relatives. On January 9, he was transferred to prison hospice care, where he died the next day. According to the *New York Times* (14 January), a prison spokesman attributed his death to "unspecified natural causes." But what is "natural" in America's dungeons where so many—especially black men, and those standing up to racist capitalist oppression—are incarcerated for life?

From its appearance in the early 1970s proclaiming the right of armed self-defense, the predominantly black, radical back-to-nature MOVE commune was met with vicious cop terror. After a year-long siege, on 8 August 1978 an army of nearly 600 police surrounded the MOVE home to evict its defenseless residents. The police unleashed a furious fusillade so intense that one of their own officers, James Ramp, was killed in the police cross fire. At least eight witnesses testified that no gunshots came from the MOVE house, and no fingerprints of any MOVE member were found on the weapons supposedly taken from their home.

The MOVE 9 were among the first activists supported by the Partisan Defense Committee's program of stipends for class-war prisoners. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops in collaboration with the Feds. In 1989, Phil wrote the PDC, a class-struggle legal defense organization associated with the SL: "It is clear by the murders of our family on May 13, 1985 and the denial of parole to MOVE members who are eligible for parole on other cases this system has no intention of releasing MOVE members before our maximum sentences are served."

A regular feature of PDC Holiday Appeal fundraisers in recent years has been the auction of Phil's paintings to raise money for our stipend fund. In a recent letter, Phil thanked the PDC for "all the support you've given those of us locked away in these hell holes and your constant activities aimed at bringing every one home!" We honor Phil's memory by keeping up the fight for all class-war prisoners.



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WORKERS VANGUARD

The Bankruptcy of Pressuring the Democrats

Selma: The Movie and the Real Story

By Brian Manning and John Perry

Director Ava DuVernay's film *Selma*, based on three months of tumultuous black voting rights protests in 1965, graphically portrays the courage and tenacity of civil rights activists in the face of racial oppression and KKK and state terror in the Jim Crow South. From the Birmingham church bombing and the savage attack on marchers at Selma's Pettus Bridge to the beatings and murders of black and white protesters, *Selma* paints a picture of the horrific racist violence.

But fundamentally the movie is a glorification of Martin Luther King Jr.'s liberal program of nonviolent protest and reliance on the federal government and the Democratic Party. The moral of the film is that

AP

Above: "Bloody Sunday" at Pettus Bridge in Selma, 7 March 1965. Below: Black Panther Party of Lowndes County, Alabama, 1966. *Selma* film glorifies King's liberal pacifist, pro-Democratic Party politics, which more militant activists were rejecting at the time.

Doug Harris

Selma—the last major battle of the Southern civil rights movement—was a watershed because voting rights for black people paved the way for black elected officials. As longtime Congressman John Lewis said in 2009 right before President Obama's inauguration: "Barack Obama is what comes at the end of that bridge in Selma."

The mass mobilization of black people against the Jim Crow system of legal segregation disrupted and challenged the racist American bourgeois order. But from the outset, the civil rights struggles were dominated by a black middle-class leadership wedded to Democratic Party liberalism, with King as its most effective exponent. The movement achieved important, though partial, gains for black people largely in the realm of formal democratic rights, whose main beneficiaries make up a thin layer of the black petty bourgeoisie. To this day, the blood shed to win the right to vote is invoked to herd black people to the ballot box to elect "lesser evil" Democrats.

The civil rights movement met its defeat in the mid 1960s when it swept into the North, where the Jim Crow segregation codes did not exist. Activists ran headlong into the raw reality of black oppression that is woven into the fabric of American capitalism: rat-infested slums, crumbling schools, mass unemployment and rampant cop terror. Fifty years later, and six years after the election of a black president, the hellish conditions of the urban ghetto masses have only gotten worse. While today possessing formal equality under the law, black people remain a race-color caste, integrated into the U.S. economy but in the main forcibly segregated at the bottom of society.

Barack Obama proclaimed that the civil rights movement took black people "90 percent of the way" to full equality. But the yawning gulf between white and black America persists by every measure—employment, income, housing, education, incarceration rates. Black people are still blown away on the streets of America with impunity by the cops simply because of the color of their skin. The massive military mobilizations by the racist capitalist state against protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, last year could have been Birmingham or Selma in the 1960s. Those gains that were won in the civil rights struggles almost immediately came under attack. The 1965 Voting Rights Act, which *Selma* presents as a crowning achievement, has been gutted over the years, with the Supreme Court dealing it a major blow two years ago.

From the days of chattel slavery, American capitalism has rested on a bedrock of black oppression. Achieving genuine equality will take nothing less than a socialist overturn of the capitalist profit system by the multiracial working class, whose central role in production gives it the social power and objective class interest to put an end to capitalist rule. This country's rulers ably wield anti-black racism to divide and weaken the working class. In the course of class struggle against the common enemy—the owners of the banks and industry—white workers will be compelled to forego race prejudice. What is crucially needed is to forge a workers party that emblazons the cause of black freedom on its banner: *Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!*

The 1965 Selma Protests

In early 1965, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had been organizing a voter registration effort in Selma, combating an entrenched system that denied the right to vote through a combination of racist terror, poll taxes and "literacy" tests. In the film, a white registrar

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Greece: European Union Austerity Elections

No Vote to Syriza! Vote Communist Party!

Greek voters will go to the polls on January 25 with the dominant powers of the European Union (EU), centrally the German bankers, demanding continued austerity to pay for Greece's massive debt. The snap parliamentary election was called by Prime Minister Antonis Samaras of New Democracy (ND) when the parliament in late December failed for the third time to elect a new president.

In a country suffering mass unemployment and poverty due to the deep, ongoing capitalist economic crisis in Europe, the main issue looming behind the elections is Greece's continued membership in the imperialist EU and use of the euro. Most ostensible socialists, in Greece and internationally, look to a victory by the left-sounding petty-bourgeois Syriza led by Alexis Tsipras, despite its explicit commitment to the EU. In contrast, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece call for critical electoral support to the Greek Communist Party (KKE) as they did in 2012. Printed below is a translation of the TGG's January 15 statement, which raises the demands: Down with the EU! For workers revolution! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

* * *

The Trotskyist Group of Greece, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), calls for a vote to the KKE in the January 25 general election. The KKE, uniquely on the left, is standing in this election completely opposed both to the imperialist EU and to all those parties who defend the EU, including the petty-bourgeois Syriza party. *No vote to Syriza!*

As Trotskyists, our perspective is the fight for workers revolution here and internationally. We therefore oppose Syriza not only because it is committed to keeping Greece in the EU, which is a pledge for more hunger and joblessness, but also because it does not in any way represent the interests of the working class. Syriza's program is bourgeois and its base is among the petty-bourgeoisie—small business owners, farmers and professionals

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WORKERS VANGUARD 50¢

No. 1061 6 February 2015

U.S. Rulers Fuel East Ukraine Slaughter

Reuters

AFP

White House

Top left: Victim of cluster bomb fired by Kiev government forces into heavily populated area of Donetsk city, 2 October 2014. Top right: Artillery and rocket fire have devastated wide swathes of eastern Ukraine. Above: Imperialist-backed Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko at White House, September 2014.

Down With Imperialist Sanctions Against Russia!

For the Right of Self-Rule in Donetsk, Luhansk!

FEBRUARY 3—Since the start of the year, there has been a dramatic increase in fighting between the Ukrainian government and forces of the breakaway People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk that are backed by Russia. The civil war in eastern Ukraine, in which over 5,300 people have been killed and 1.5 million displaced, is the direct result of U.S. imperialist machinations. In building up a client state on Russia's border, Washington aims to spike the influence of Moscow, a potential rival, in countries of the former Soviet Union.

To that end, the Pentagon has also launched Operation Atlantic Resolve under which it has strengthened its air, ground and naval presence in East Europe and conducted a series of expanded military exercises in Poland and the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Washington plans to send an additional 100 armored vehicles and 3,000 troops to Europe as well as advisers to train the fascist-infested Ukrainian National Guard. U.S. Navy ships regularly patrol the Black Sea with the Ukrainian navy.

Every few days, another report emerges of dozens killed in artillery or rocket barrages that have damaged homes, schools and hospitals in numerous cities and towns across the Donbass (Donets basin). Last October, Human Rights Watch and the *New York Times*, both pro-imperialist mouthpieces, reported that the Ukrainian army had fired cluster munitions at civilian targets. These weapons are designed to kill indiscriminately over a wide area and children often pick up unexploded bomblets. In the rebel-held territory, the Kiev government has ceased the payment of pensions and cut off virtually all banking services. The population of the Donbass has been saved from starvation only by a series of humanitarian aid convoys from Russia that have delivered some 15,000 tons of food, medicine and building materials. Across Ukraine, economic dislocation caused by the war has brought greater hardship to working people, the poor and the elderly.

The recent upsurge in fighting was effectively instigated by the U.S. government. In December, President Barack Obama signed the Ukraine Freedom Support Act authorizing an additional $350 million in military aid to Ukraine over the next three years and further economic sanctions against Russia. The sanctions aim not only to force Russia to back down in regard to Ukraine but also to head off Russian support to separatists in Georgia and Moldova (as well as to the Syrian government). The legislation, which sailed unopposed through a Congress known for its partisan deadlock, also bolsters attempts to undermine the Vladimir Putin regime in Moscow in the guise of "support for Russian democracy." Some $30 million per year was allocated for increased broadcasts by Cold War relics like the Voice of America and the mobilization of the CIA-linked U.S. Agency for International Development and National Endowment for Democracy.

Thus encouraged by its masters in Washington, Kiev launched an offensive against Donetsk on January 18. After repulsing the government forces, the Donbass militias launched a counteroffensive, capturing the Donetsk city airport, advancing on Mariupol and threatening to encircle thousands of Ukrainian troops in Debaltseve, a strategic town on the railroad connecting Donetsk and Luhansk. With the latest battlefield defeats for Kiev, the White House and NATO generals are now mooting the supply of additional arms to Ukraine. ***Down with the imperialist sanctions! No U.S. military aid to Ukraine!***

We presently have a military side with the insurgents against the imperialist-backed Kiev government. At the same time, we give no political support to the Great Russian chauvinist rebel leaders of Donetsk and Luhansk, nor to Putin's capitalist regime. We are implacable opponents of not only Ukrainian but also Russian nationalism. On this score, we support independence for Chechnya and defended the Chechen people against the brutal Russian military campaigns waged by Putin and his predecessor Boris Yeltsin.

Kiev Government, Made in USA

Last February, Ukraine's corrupt president, Viktor Yanukovich, was toppled by a fascist-spearheaded coup arising out of the Maidan protests engineered by Washington with the able assistance of the European Union (EU) imperialists. The post-coup government, which included fascists of the Svoboda party, quickly moved to ban the official use of the Russian language. (The proposed ban was tabled to accommodate imperialist discomfort with this too-frank expression of reactionary nationalism.) That and other moves by the Kiev government sparked justified fears among Russian-speaking people, who launched protests throughout the country.

With the overwhelming support of the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea, historically part of Russia, Putin moved to reclaim the peninsula and secure the longstanding base of Russia's Black Sea fleet. In the ethnically mixed but predominantly Russian-speaking provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, militants took up arms in the face of government and fascist attacks. The Ukrainian government's first two attempts to mount military offensives in eastern Ukraine last spring directly followed visits to Kiev by CIA chief John Brennan and Vice President Joe Biden. At the time, Obama pontificated: "The Ukrainian government has the right and responsibility to uphold law and order within its territory."

The leaders of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics held a referendum last May that resulted in an overwhelming vote in favor of self-rule, which could mean autonomy within a federated

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On Federal Troops in Little Rock

To commemorate Black History Month, we reprint a 10 Octoher 1957 letter by Richard S. Fraser to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) Political Committee opposing the party's craven support to the dispatch of federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas. In the wake of the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ordering the desegregation of public schools, Dixiecrat Democratic Party politicians unleashed the forces of "law and order" as well as extra-legal terror by KKK-infested lynch mobs to attack black people fighting for equal rights across the South. The crisis reverberated internationally, chipping away at the U.S. government's democratic veneer and posture as top cop of freedom at the very height of the Cold War.

A flash point came in September 1957 when Arkansas governor Orval Faubus ordered the state militia to draw guns on nine black students who attempted to enter Little Rock's Central High School. Howling racist mobs surrounded the students and threatened to lynch them. Later that month, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in the 101st Airborne. The big lie that has been accepted as official history is that the federal government stepped in to defend the helpless local black people. The true story is that Eisenhower sent in the troops to crush a local upheaval that included the organization of black self-defense against racist terror. As the *Amsterdom News* (28 September 1957), a New York black newspaper, headlined: "Ike Moves as Negroes Hit Back."

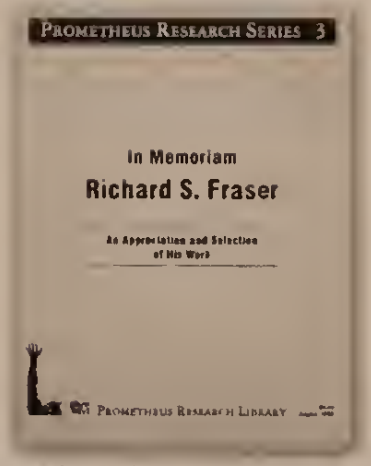
The issue of looking to the federal government to defend the oppressed black masses was hotly debated inside the then-Trotskyist SWP. The party and its newspaper, the *Militant*, had first called on the federal government to send troops to Mississippi two years earlier. Dick Fraser opposed that call and, in a 1956 document titled "Contribution to the Discussion on the Slogan 'Send Federal Troops to Mississippi'," noted presciently that "the most probable condition under which the Federal Government will send troops to the South will be that the Negroes hold the initiative in the struggle.... When the Negroes take the initiative it is a 'race riot' and the public security is threatened and an excellent reason is given to the government to intervene."

AP

26 September 1957: 101st Airborne Division outside Little Rock's Central High School. Socialist Workers Party's newspaper (30 September 1957) wrongly promoted intervention of troops as measure to protect black youth.

In the early civil rights movement, the SWP tailed the middle-class preachers like Martin Luther King Jr., who opposed black self-defense and sought to contain the struggle within the framework of reliance on the federal government. King sent a telegram to Eisenhower "to express my sincere support for the stand you have taken to restore law and order in Little Rock." The call for federal troops was an important signpost in the SWP's degeneration to centrism (revolutionary in words, reformist in deeds) and later abject reformism and explicit junking of a Trotskyist program.

Dick Fraser was a veteran Trotskyist and tenacious fighter who illuminated a program of ***revolutionory integrotion***: the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. Fraser's lifetime of revolutionary scholarship on the black question sprang from his conviction that to forge a program for black liberation, it is necessary to study the social forces that created the institutions of racial oppression in the U.S. Fraser showed that the systematic subjugation of black people is too inextricably hound up with the historical development and economic, social and political reality of the American capitalist system to permit a reformist solution or separation of the struggle for black freedom from emancipating the working class as a whole.



***Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, available online at prl.org, or order from Spartacist Pub. Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 ($7).**

Although we had political differences with Dick Fraser, we credit him as our teacher on the nature of racial oppression in the U.S. More of his writings can be found in "In Memoriam, Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work" (*Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, 1990) and in "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question." (*Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised], "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism").

* * *

The editorial on the action by the Federal government in sending troops to Little Rock, published on the front page of the *Militant* of September 20th, brings the dispute over this question into sharp focus.

This episode has posed the fundamental question point-blank: shall the struggle in the South be waged in abject dependence upon the government, or independently by the masses?

The entire Negro community of Little Rock, numbering 25,000, was poised and ready for action. Their eagerness to participate in the struggle at times *overflowed in dromotic eruptions, os testified to by the Negro press*. Moreover, this mass eagerness occurred within a favorable relationship of forces.

The Negro middle class leaders refused the masses any part in the struggle, demanding that they cease aspiring to act and to accept a passive role meekly. Having betrayed the masses' desire for action, the leadership appealed instead to the government to solve the crisis.

The demand for Federal Troops to the South is revealed in action, not as an adjunct to but as a substitute for the organized action of the masses and is counterposed directly to it.

The editorial sees in this situation a "Valuable Precedent"—"For the use of federal troops in Little Rock constitutes a precedent for the Negro people that the capitalist politicians—much as they will squirm and try to weasel out of—will never be able to get away from. At each crucial stage in the fight for the enforcement of the rights they now possess on paper, the Negro people will be in a position to demand federal intervention if they need it...."

If they need it? Who is to determine if they need it? The editors of the *Militant* seem quite willing to take the word of the middle class leadership whether the Negro people need Federal soldiers—and this leadership will continue to prefer governmental action to mass action, as has been their tradition.

This perspective for the struggle is justified by the *Militont* in the following manner: "The resulting political pressure...can blow the Republican-Democratic political monopoly sky hīgh." Such a formula provides a political justification for continued dependence on the government and for perpetuation of the policy of *no organization of the mosses*.

Spokesmen for the P.C. [Political Committee] convention resolution have repeatedly claimed that one of its central points was the question of ***mass oction vs. dependence on the government***. The editorial in question, however, illustrates the contradictory character of the resolution which at one and the same time calls for a class struggle policy in the Negro movement, but also endorses parts of the consciously collaborationist and anti-revolutionary program of the middle class leadership.

I request that this letter be circulated to the N.C. [National Committee] as soon as possible. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is February 3

No. 1061 **6 February 2015**

Spartacist Black History Month Forums

Racist Cop Terror and the Fraud of Police Reform

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Speaker: Diana Coleman, Veteran Activist in the Southern Civil Rights Movement

LOS ANGELES
Saturday, Feb. 7, 4 p.m.
Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Ave.
(2 blocks north of Vermont/Sunset Redline Metro Station)
For info: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

BAY AREA
Saturday, Feb. 14, 2 p.m.
Rockridge Library
5366 College Ave, Oakland
(5 blocks south of Rockridge BART)
For info: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday, Feb. 21, 3 p.m.
322 West 48th Street, First Floor
Manhattan
(Between 8th and 9th Aves — Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)
For info: (212) 267-1025 or nysl@tiac.net

CHICAGO
Saturday, Feb. 28, 2 p.m.
Chicago Public Library
Rudy Lozano Branch
1805 S. Loomis St.
(4 blocks east of Pink Line 18th St. stop)
For info: (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Cleophas C. (Hawk) Hawkins

WV Photo

1934–2015

Our friend and collaborator "Hawk" died on January 9 in Chesapeake, Virginia, at the age of 80. His health had been failing for over a year. We share the sorrow of Hawk's family—his wife Ann, his three daughters Edna, Cheryl and Gail, and his son Harry, as well as his 10 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. Ann, in particular, was generously hospitable and friendly to comrades who worked and stayed in the Tidewater Area.

Hawk was a longtime sympathizer of our party, facilitating our work at crucial junctures by providing insight on and opening doors to the black proletariat in the South and contributing commentaries to *Workers Vanguard*. Hawk regularly received bundles of *WV*, which he distributed to trade unionists and black activists.

We first met Hawk, a shipyard worker in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1981 at a massive AFL-CIO labor rally in Washington, D.C., in support of the fired PATCO air traffic controllers (see "For Labor Action to Bring Down Reagan!" *WV* No. 289, 25 September 1981). He subscribed to our press, and comrades then made trips to meet with Hawk and some of his co-workers. He had attended a few Socialist Workers Party forums in Newport News. A militant shop steward in his International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) local, Hawk was looking for bigger answers, and he found them in the SL/ICL's program of class struggle and revolutionary integrationism.

In 1982, Hawk played a key role in making possible our labor/black mobilization that stopped the Klan in Washington, D.C., on November 27. Labor participation from the D.C. area was *crucial* for this action. When two of our organizers went to Tidewater to meet with Hawk, he didn't hesitate. Hawk helped us secure the endorsements of his union local's officers and then started calling other locals in the yard, leading to the endorsements of the two black International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) locals in Norfolk. ILA International president Teddy Gleason also endorsed. The ILA and IBEW put up the money for a bus for the demo contingent from Tidewater—the Nat Turner Brigade!

This support unlocked the entire situation: D.C. unions and community groups began to endorse and publicize the mobilization to their members and to allow comrades to speak and leaflet at union meetings and work locations. Momentum was building—unions and other groups in cities as far away as Chicago endorsed and signed up to form contingents. It was the unions that provided the labor muscle that made our mobilization the force that could stand up to then-mayor Marion Barry's cops. There were no arrests and the Klan did not march (see "We Stopped the Klan!" *WV* supplement, 3 December 1982). That victory flowed from Hawk's initial efforts.

Through this work, Hawk saw that it is possible to mobilize the power of the working class to stop race terror, in this case on the basis of a united front centered on labor but including other organizations and individuals. He became convinced that our party was serious and knew how that power could be unchained to smash the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. Hawk started to read basic Marxist works with us and to bring other workers around. He had a keen interest in the Russian Revolution and understood its relevance to abolishing capitalism today. Hawk had discussions with workers trying to raise their consciousness about the need to learn from history and apply its lessons in struggle. Those conversations were reflected in his contributions to *WV*.

Hawk became a part of the fabric of our movement, developing relationships with many comrades. We had our occasional differences, which Hawk wasn't shy about arguing out. He was hardheaded and could be cantankerous, which is what made him what he was. In the mid '80s, Hawk corresponded with veteran Trotskyist Dick Fraser, whose groundbreaking document "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question" provided the foundation for our program for black liberation. He joined in rough-and-tumble, raucous political repartee, giving as good as he got. As Fraser said when asking Hawk for a comment on his "Two Lectures on Black Liberation" (presented in 1953): "Don't spare me with your criticism. I can take it, as well as dish it out."

Hawk continued to organize black Tidewater workers to participate in SL and Partisan Defense Committee activities. In 1988, when fascist skinheads and the Klan declared their intention to march in Philadelphia, Hawk reassembled the Nat Turner Brigade for the PDC-initiated November 5 mobilization in that city (see "Labor/Black Power Stopped the Klan!" *WV* No. 465, 18 November 1988). On that tense morning, with skinheads lurking around the perimeter and the cops menacing the rally, comrades described it as "exhilarating" when Hawk and his contingent arrived and stepped off the bus.

In the '90s, Hawk became frustrated with the lack of struggle and drifted from our political moorings as he approached and entered retirement. He turned his attention to community work. Feeling his predominantly black neighborhood was being neglected by the city, Hawk led efforts to establish a youth recreation center, a park, an extended bus route, a storm drainage system, a fire station and to remodel the local library.

Despite this political distance, Hawk always remained a friend of our party, introducing people to *WV* and to comrades when we were in the area. In a recent call, Hawk expressed great pleasure in hearing about a new statue in Charleston commemorating Denmark Vesey, who was hanged for leading a slave rebellion in 1822.

Hawk was born Cleophas C. Hawkins (although nobody ever called him that, including his wife) and raised in rural North Carolina. After leaving the Air Force, having served as a mechanic in Korea in the mid '50s, Hawk went to work in a shipyard in Boston. He began investigating various organizations that were part of the black struggle at the time and met Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan. Although having great respect for Malcolm, Hawk was never attracted to black nationalism or Islam. Hawk always considered Farrakhan a hustler, noting he used to be a "song and dance man."

When the Boston shipyard closed, Hawk transferred to the Tidewater area, getting a job in a Norfolk shipyard as an electronics technician. While his co-workers respected his skills and knowledge, he made a name for himself as a militant when a racist foreman threw the coats of the workers, who were predominantly black, into a trash can because they had left them on the shop bench. Hawk retrieved all the coats, brushed them off, neatly hung them up... and then threw the foreman's coat in the trash. He was elected steward and subsequently secretary-treasurer of his IBEW local. Hawk fought for a greater role for the predominantly black locals in the yard's union council and defended workers victimized by racist managers.

Comrades who spent time with Hawk have fond memories of talking with him, his glasses dangling from one ear, mysteriously affixed under his red beard. They learned what life was like for blacks in the American South and the constant struggle against racist victimization—often humiliating, frequently violent—as well as the struggles of the unions. Hawk was the advanced worker that we strive to draw around our party, who bring with them links to broader layers of the working class. Hawk's work with us shows that in the course of future struggles, the promise of our revolutionary program will attract more workers like Hawk to our banner.

WV Photos

Left: Hawk as a union marshal at PDC-initiated demonstration to stop the KKK, Philadelphia, 5 November 1988. Right: 27 November 1982 labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C., that stopped the Klan cold.

Report from Australia

Dirty Deeds Down Under

We print below a report written by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Australia in November 2014. It has been excerpted and edited for publication. In Australia today, the federal government of Prime Minister Tony Abbott is a right-wing Liberal/National Party coalition. Since this report was written three months ago, support for Abbott and his government has plummeted.

For a more detailed account of the capitalist offensive against the trade unions, see "For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Bosses' Onslaught!" in Australasian Spartacist *No. 223, Winter 2014. Concerning the strategic objective of the imperialists, led by the U.S., to destroy the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state through military provocations as well as other means, see for example "For Unconditional Military Defense of Chinese Deformed Workers State! U.S., Japanese Provocations in East China Sea" (WV No. 1041, 7 March 2014). Articles from the press of all ICL sections are available on our website at icl-fi.org.*

By the beginning of 2014, Ford, General Motors and Toyota had all decided it was no longer profitable to produce cars in Australia, signalling the demise of the domestic auto industry. The government—which seeks to blame job losses on the pay and conditions of unionised workers—is glad to let previously subsidised companies with unionised workforces go under as a means to gut union power. By 2017, tens of thousands of auto workers are slated to lose their jobs and will join the hundreds of thousands of other manufacturing workers who have been made redundant [laid off] over the last six years.

Last May, the Abbott government introduced a budget that took the axe to social welfare, education and health. These deeply unpopular cuts sparked widespread anger, resulting in sizeable protests across the country, including some limited strike actions in the state of Victoria. International events—the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner [see "On Malaysia Airlines MH17 Disaster," *WV* No. 1050, 8 August 2014] and the renewed imperialist war in the Near East—allowed the government to recoup some support through whipping up patriotic fervour, in which it was assisted by the leaders of the Labor Party (ALP), who backed the government's repellent flag-waving.

Amid the bloody Near East intervention, which was baptised as "humanitarian," and a racist campaign against "homegrown *jihadists*," the anti-budget rallies shrivelled. The ALP and union tops along with small "l" liberals were paralysed by that fear campaign. There has been almost no opposition to the U.S.-led war in the Near East, even of the pacifist character of the 2003 rallies calling for "No War on Iraq." Today, the biggest demonstrations—of a couple hundred people—have called for imperialist intervention; these have been organised by Kurdish groups, backed by various reformist left organisations.

Oemotix

Anadolu

Above: Thousands protest in Sydney, part of nationwide demonstrations last July against federal budget cuts. Below: Protest in Melbourne against witchhunts of Muslims, October 2014.

In the context of the current round of imperialist plunder and war, the Australian capitalist rulers have seized the opportunity to shred more democratic rights under the bogus "war on terror." In September, carefully orchestrated "anti-terror" raids in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne provided justification for a new tranche of repressive laws. It also reignited anti-Muslim hysteria, including a media debate over banning the *burka* (head-to-toe Islamic dress) that made some of the ravings of fascistic demagogue Pauline Hanson seem mainstream.

The small fascist groups that inhabit this country are certainly emboldened. The Australian Defence League now openly threatens to kill Muslim leaders. This fetid reactionary climate melds with the government's ongoing hate campaign against refugees. Fleeing imperialist devastation of their homelands in Afghanistan and Iraq, or imperialist-backed terror in Sri Lanka, refugees continue to be rounded up and dumped in hellhole offshore camps on Nauru and Manus Island in the Pacific. Australia has also just signed a deal with Cambodia that will allow asylum seekers to be dumped there.

State terror against the small Aboriginal population continues unabated. This was recently highlighted by the horrific death of Miss Dhu, a young Aboriginal woman incarcerated in Western Australia. Arrested for unpaid fines, she spent three days in agony, vomiting day and night with a high fever and paralysis in her lower body. It was reported that police mocked her as a "druggie." Twice taken to a hospital and thrown back in prison, she finally died either in prison or on her third trip to the hospital on the floor of a police wagon.

Murdoch's *Australian* newspaper is reporting that if the state cannot get so-called Muslim "hate preachers" under existing "anti-terror" laws, they will get them "Al Capone style" on immigration, tax or welfare fraud. Despite the supposed budget crisis, lots of money is being poured into the state security agencies. Meanwhile, the military alliance with the U.S. is being strengthened. A new international "counter-terrorism" base being built in Geraldton, Western Australia, will assist in drone assassinations and enhance the U.S. Pacific fleet's access to military satellites, aiding the encirclement of China. Former army chief Peter Leahy's ravings about a long and savage war, including drones and special ops ready to go into any country "under threat" from *jihadist* forces, barely raise an eyebrow.

That said, even some of the most right-wing bourgeois scribes are nervous about new "anti-terror" laws that would make it illegal to report on special intelligence operations—an Orwellian state of affairs. The bourgeoisie worries out loud that the white Anglo-Celtic composition of its security agencies undercuts its ability to prosecute the "war on terror." The government is arguing that the financial cost of sending Australian soldiers to fight in Iraq alongside their Kurdish *peshmerga* buddies makes the need for the budget cuts in other areas even more pressing. This has swelled the growing chorus for even more heavily taxing the working class. A new fuel tax is projected and the ground is being prepared to increase the GST, Australia's broad-based tax on most goods and services.

While pushing measures to increase revenue, the bourgeoisie has been trying to sear into the collective memory of the Labor parliamentary caucus that the ALP should never again try a stunt like its attempted tax on the large mining magnates a few years back. Other plans of the previous ALP government—such as the National Broadband Network, a supposed national needs-based education system and a National Disability Insurance Scheme—are withering on the vine or being trashed. Amid this slashing and burning, Labor reformist icon and former prime minister Gough Whitlam died [see page 5].

His death has provided an opportunity for the bourgeoisie to reflect on this "towering leader"—the main message being, however, that for the foreseeable future there should not be another Gough Whitlam. Amid the flood of articles and obituaries, there has been minimal discussion about why Whitlam was ousted by the British Queen's Australian representative, a move engineered by the CIA with the connivance of British intelligence.

Attacks on the Trade Unions

Despite the government's savage attacks on workers and the oppressed, the hidebound ACTU [Australian Council of Trade Unions] tops haven't even coordinated token labour resistance, while aggressively pushing economic nationalism. At the same time, the union tops have acceded down the line to the government's Royal Commission into "corruption" in the union movement. Abbott is planning to unleash a special posse of federal and local police to hunt down so-called "rogue" unionists. This witchhunt has the full backing of Bill Shorten, federal leader of the Labor Party (the supposed Opposition).

The bosses are wielding accusations of union corruption in their campaign to pressure the ALP to break its links with organised labour. Particular attention is focused on the CFMEU construction union in Victoria. Its leader John Setka could now be charged with "blackmail" because he allegedly organised secondary boycotts during a big dispute in Melbourne in 2012. During the dispute, Setka reportedly said that "we're at war" and "in a war you cut the supply lines."

The government is working various angles to undermine the unions. The High Court recently upheld the sacking of a CFMEU delegate from a struck mine because during a week-long strike in 2012 he waved a sign "No Principles SCABS No Guts." The executive director of the bosses' Mines and Metals Association declared that "abusive conduct on picket lines should be treated as workplace bullying," adding, "Times have changed: industrial abuse belongs in the dusthin of history." Under threat of tough sanctions, Aboriginal people and thousands of youth are now being forced into work-for-the-dole schemes. These schemes are used as a wedge to drive down the wages and conditions of all workers.

The Maritime Union (MUA), which has carried out a couple of recent strikes on the east and west coasts, is locked in a dispute with a non-union marine company

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Australia's Gough Whitlam, 1916-2014

The CIA, the Queen's Agent and the Man Who Got in the Way

When onetime Australian Labor Party (ALP) prime minister Gough Whitlam died at the age of 98 last October, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (26 October 2014) ran an obituary headlined "Martyr for a Moment, Hero for a Lifetime." Whitlam's moment of martyrdom came when his government was deposed on 11 November 1975 by Queen Elizabeth's representative, Governor-General Sir John Kerr, using the English monarchy's dubious "reserve powers" in Australia, which is part of the Commonwealth. What this and many other obituaries in the bourgeois media covered up or dismissed is that Whitlam's ouster was a CIA-engineered "constitutional" coup, executed by Kerr in league with Australia's conservative Opposition. Insofar as this social-democratic politician has become a retrospective hero in the eyes of sections of the Australian bourgeoisie, it is because he not only helped quell a massive working-class outpouring against his ouster but took what he knew of CIA spying and subversion, including against his regime, to his grave.

Rex Features

Whitlam addresses press from steps of Parliament following dismissal of his government, Canberra, 11 November 1975.

At the heart of the Whitlam affair, as far as the CIA was concerned, was its secret Pine Gap spy base in central Australia. Described by former CIA agent Victor Marchetti as a "giant vacuum cleaner," Pine Gap collected data from U.S. spy satellites monitoring the Soviet Union. One of several U.S. installations in Australia, the base was key to Washington's counterrevolutionary designs against the Stalinist-led Soviet workers state, including plans for a nuclear first strike. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, Pine Gap shifted its sights to China, the most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states.

Having worked with pliant, conservative Liberal Party governments for 23 years, mainly under Prime Minister Robert Menzies, the CIA and its underlings in the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) were mistrustful of Whitlam from the moment he was elected in December 1972. A classically educated son of a Commonwealth Crown Solicitor who was proud of his own elevation to Queen's Counsel (the top rank of lawyers), Whitlam was no radical. Whereas the Menzies era could be described as "troglodyte Australian capitalism," Whitlam wanted to modernize this former British colonial outpost, now beholden to Washington, so that it could play a more effective role as a regional imperialist power in Asia.

We headlined our article on Whitlam's victory: "Capital's Labor Trustee: Australian Labor Party Elected" (*WV* No. 17, March 1973). Whitlam was elected with support from sizable sections of the Australian bourgeoisie (including right-wing media magnate Rupert Murdoch), which both welcomed modernization and hoped that a government of the Labor Party—a party based on the working class but with a pro-capitalist leadership—could contain a rising tide of class struggle. Only three years earlier, some one million workers had gone on strike nationally in defense of an avowedly Communist union official, Clarrie O'Shea, who was jailed for his defiance of anti-union laws. Class struggle continued to mount after Whitlam's election. The Christmas 1972 U.S. bombing of Hanoi, the capital of North Vietnam, brought waterfront workers out on a political strike against American shipping companies.

In his first few months in office, Whitlam implemented a number of significant reforms aimed at appeasing the restive proletariat. He introduced a national

continued on page 6

Reuters

November 2011: Air force base in Darwin, where some 1,100 Marines are currently stationed to bolster counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia alliance against Chinese deformed workers state.

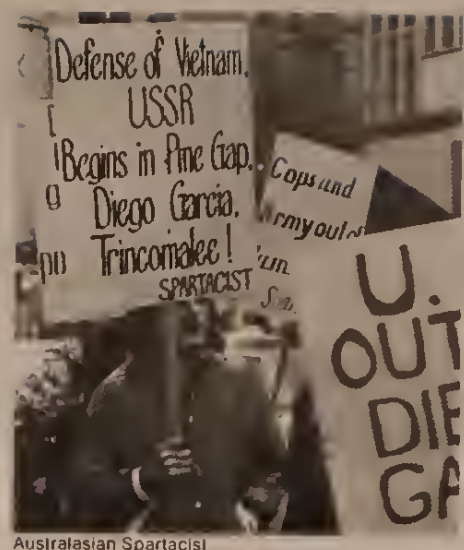
Whitlam...

(continued from page 5)

health service, made higher education free for all and granted women workers in the public sector equal pay. Applying a fresh coat of paint to the hoary facade of racist "White Australia," Whitlam promised to alleviate the misery of the downtrodden Aboriginal people and liberalized immigration rights for Asians and Pacific Islanders. Whitlam pulled Australian troops out of the losing U.S.-led counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam, while senior cabinet minister Jim Cairns denounced the Nixon administration as "corrupt" for its bombing of Hanoi. The security services saw Cairns, a prominent antiwar campaigner and in the left wing of the ALP, as little short of a "commo." Frank Snepp, a CIA officer then stationed in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), later recalled: "We were told the Australians might as well be regarded as North Vietnamese collaborators."

Whitlam would draw increasing ire from the CIA and ASIO. The day after he took office, he told ASIO that it could not vet members of his staff; a few months later he poured salt on the wound when he authorized a raid on ASIO offices in Melbourne. At his first meeting with the U.S. ambassador, Whitlam promised to maintain the secret U.S. bases in Australia—as long as Washington didn't try to "screw us." In April 1974, he told Parliament that he would honor agreements on existing U.S. bases but would not allow any new ones. By then, Washington had appointed a new ambassador, one Marshall Green, known as the "coupmaster." The moniker was well-earned, as Green had a habit of turning up in places about to undergo bloody, U.S.-backed coups (e.g., Indonesia 1965).

Whitlam was also facing growing dissatisfaction on the home front. A sharp spike in the price of oil in 1973 had drawn Australia into recession. The reforms that may have earlier appeared affordable to the bourgeoisie no longer seemed so. Whitlam harped on the need to fight inflation; his labor minister denounced unions for "bloody-mindedness" and "selfishness" and demanded that they accede to a "voluntary" wage freeze and no-strike pledge. In 1974, twice as many workdays were lost to strike activity as in 1971. The bourgeoisie was losing patience with the ALP for not moving hard enough or fast enough against its working-class base, and the erstwhile pro-Whitlam Murdoch press, in collaboration with the conservative parties, spearheaded a sustained media campaign to unseat him.



Australasian Spartacist

Cairns was forced out of his post as treasurer in July 1975, followed a few months later by a second cabinet minister. The Senate, controlled by the conservative Opposition, refused to approve a federal budget until Whitlam agreed to new elections. On November 2, Whitlam openly accused the Opposition of being funded by the CIA and vowed to provide details, including the names of CIA operatives, to the next session of Parliament, nine days later. On the morning of November 11, Whitlam met Kerr, the Queen's representative, who proceeded to sack Whitlam and appoint Liberal Opposition leader Malcolm Fraser in his place.

According to Australian journalist John Pilger, the CIA was terrified that Whitlam "was about to 'blow' the cover of the man who had set up Pine Gap" and "was certain Whitlam would announce the cancellation of the Pine Gap agreement" when notice of renewal came due a month later (*A Secret Country* [1989]). Whether these fears were valid or not, the CIA certainly had plenty of reason to want to see the back of Whitlam, as did the Australian bourgeoisie. The Americans turned to "our man Kerr," as the CIA called him. Kerr had a long history of association with the CIA going back to its WWII predecessor, the OSS, and various CIA fronts like the Asia Foundation and the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom. "All this was on the record," writes Pilger, when Whitlam nominated Kerr to be governor-general in 1974.

AFP

Left: Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand takes stand against anti-Soviet war drive at 1981 Melbourne protest. Above: Radar domes of Pine Gap spy base, now repurposed to snoop on China.

Around the same time that the CIA & Co. were putting in place the scenario for Whitlam's sacking, an idealistic young Californian with a penchant for falconry was working for a CIA contractor, TRW Inc. (formerly Thompson Ramo Wooldridge), which decoded messages from Pine Gap. Coming across information of CIA dirty tricks in Australia, Christopher Boyce was enraged by the duplicity of the U.S. government. With his friend Andrew Daulton Lee, Boyce took documents from TRW and made them available to the Soviets. Their story inspired the book and film, *The Falcon and the Snowman*. After nearly a quarter-century of incarceration on espionage charges, Boyce was released in 2003, refusing to this day to recant. As our comrades of the then Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand wrote three decades ago: "All opponents of imperialist war, particularly in Australia, owe this man a debt. He told us more about what was really happening to this country than any Labor politician" (see "Reagan Bombs Down Under," *WV* No. 375, 22 March 1985).

When the Boyce revelations first emerged, *Australasian Spartacist* No. 43 (June 1977) commented in an article headlined "The Long Arm of the CIA": "None but a fool could doubt that the US would maintain an intelligence operation in a strategic component of its worldwide counterrevolutionary military alliances—ANZUS [the Australia-New Zealand-U.S. alliance] is hardly a secret—nor that it would keep secrets from what is after all a *very junior* imperialist partner." Gough Whitlam was certainly no fool. The late Gore Vidal, a friend of Whitlam's, quipped: "It was an unusual experiment for Australia to choose as its Prime Minister its most intelligent man."

When Whitlam was ousted, workers across Australia spontaneously poured into the streets in outrage. Ports around the country were brought to a virtual halt, rail and public transport were disrupted and calls for a general strike were rife. Seeking to break workers from the framework of parliamentary reformism, our Australian comrades pointed to the need for an extraparliamentary government based on workers organizations. The banner they carried at a mass rally in Sydney on November 13 read: "For a General Strike to Dump Fraser! For an ALP/ACTU Government Pledged to Expropriate the Capitalist Class!"

But the potential for such a challenge to capitalism was nipped in the bud, thanks largely to the efforts of Bob Hawke, then head of the ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions), as well as the Labor Party chiefs. Hawke proclaimed, "We are not going to allow this to snowball" and ensured that seething anger was channeled into parliamentary impotence. Elections held a few weeks after Whitlam's ouster gave Fraser a solid victory, and a renewed anti-labor offensive opened that continues to this day. As Labor prime minister from 1983-91, Hawke was the staunchest of U.S. allies during Ronald Reagan's Cold War II offensive against the Soviet Union. Whitlam himself, ever loyal to the capitalist order, did his best to stifle working-class resistance to his ouster and quite often denied any CIA role.

Whitlam was a modernizing social democrat whose political horizons extended no higher than to administer the capitalist state and to mollify the working class with measures that would help assure class peace for the bourgeoisie. Yet he fell afoul of the bloodiest and most crazed ruling class on the face of the earth—the U.S. bourgeoisie. An end to the spying and subversion, to the counterrevolutionary intrigues and wars carried out by both the major and minor imperialists will come only when capitalist rule is swept away by an insurgent proletariat led by a revolutionary internationalist party. ■

Australasian Spartacist

Spartacist banner at November 1975 rally in Sydney after Whitlam government was deposed by governor general.

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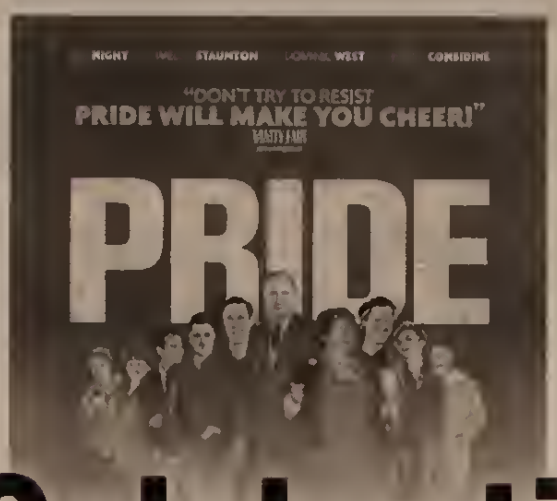
Gays and the 1984-85 British Miners Strike



A Celebration of Solidarity

A Review by Len Michelson

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 229 (Winter 2014-15), newspaper of the Spartacist League/ Britain.*

WORKERS HAMMER

The new movie *Pride* has been met, deservedly, by a raft of rave reviews. Released 30 years after the launch of the heroic 1984-85 miners strike, *Pride* offers an exhilarating glimpse at what remains one of the most combative expressions of the class struggle in Britain and at the electrifying impact it had on broad layers of the oppressed. For those, especially younger people, who know only the occasional one- or two-day token strike in response to the incessant and unrelenting attacks by the bourgeoisie against wages and living conditions and the onslaught of racist, anti-immigrant and "family values" reaction, this film is a reminder that another world is, indeed, possible.

The year-long struggle led by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) exposed the threadbare social fabric of decrepit British capitalism. Intent on taming and destroying the most powerful union in the land, the Tory [Conservative] government of Margaret Thatcher provoked a torrent of class-struggle opposition that nearly brought the union-busting, anti-Communist "Iron Lady" to her knees. In building mass pickets and defying an army of scab-herding cops that flooded the coalfields, the miners inspired tens of thousands of railway and transport workers and other unionists to risk their jobs by engaging in concrete acts of labour solidarity. The NUM's struggle against the despised Thatcher also galvanised the support and solidarity of the oppressed black and Asian communities, Irish Republicans and others chafing under the heel of the capitalist ruling class and its state, first and foremost the miners wives' and women's support groups that sprang up in every pit locality. In turn, this upwelling of support, and their own experience in struggle, dramatically changed the consciousness of the strikers and their families.

Pride focuses on an organisation of one such layer of the oppressed, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM). The film begins with the June 1984 Gay Pride parade in London, where the central figure, Mark Ashton (played by Ben Schnetzer), encourages his friends from Gay's the Word bookshop to carry collection buckets for the strike. A raucous meeting follows where Ashton, joined by a handful of other gay men and a sole lesbian, Steph (Faye Marsay), founded LGSM in the face of narrow gay sectoralist concerns and hostility to the working class (derived in part from memories of beatings by backward workers). The LGSM activists are then confronted by prejudice from the other side, as one pit after another turns down support from an openly gay group. Finally, after a series of comic misunderstandings, Dai Donovan (Paddy Considine), a strike leader from the Dulais Valley in South Wales, comes to London to meet them. Donovan's quiet and sober demeanor contrasts sharply with the ostentatious gay lifestylism flaunted by some of the LGSM.

The theme of solidarity in struggle (and human warmth) creating bonds and understanding between seeming opposites weaves through the film. The flamboyant Jonathan (played by Dominic West, previously Detective McNulty in *The Wire*) becomes the hit of the mining village after disco-dancing on the tables in the miners welfare club and teaching some of the younger strikers to dance ("Welsh men don't dance," complains one local woman). The older women in the village insist on a tour of gay clubs (including the "rubber scene") while visiting London for a strike benefit. The venerable Welsh village elder (played by Bill Nighy) confesses before the film's end that he has been in the closet all these years.

Feel-good Hollywood cliché and schmaltz abound, but they speak to a deeper truth about the strike. As we noted repeatedly in our press at the time, as the strike went on it began to break down longstanding sexual, racial, regional and national barriers. Dai speaks for the many strikers who became powerful public speakers in the course of the struggle. The fiery women portrayed in the film did become among the most intransigent and articulate fighters for a strike victory after breaking down the resistance of their husbands and sons to women playing a full part in the struggle. Women not only participated in running the communal kitchens and dining halls but also joined the picket lines and spoke publicly to motivate support for the strike at meetings and rallies. More than one of the thousands of miners who came to London to collect donations confessed to knowing "friends" who had been racist until they encountered resounding support for their struggle within the black and Asian communities. These miners were welcomed into the homes of strike supporters, just as supporters who visited the pit communities were welcomed into the homes of strikers.

In motivating gay support for the strike, Ashton declaims that Thatcher hates the miners as much as she hates gays and that the cops have now found someone else to "pick on." In our articles on the strike we, too, made the point that the miners were being subjected to the same brutality the bosses' state had long meted out to more vulnerable layers of the oppressed. But there was a more fundamental reason why blacks and Asians, women, gays and Irish Catholics rallied behind the miners cause. The miners had ***social power***, a power derived from the workers' organisation and their ability to stop the wheels of the capitalist profit system from turning. Many saw the NUM, which had brought down the Tory Heath government in 1974, as the vanguard of the trade union movement and looked to the miners to bring down the universally hated Thatcher and open the road to a better future.

But to achieve victory the solidarity the miners needed most was not money and friendship. From the outset of the struggle, we said: "Miners must not stand alone!" The only way to defeat the full might of the capitalist state arrayed against the NUM was to bring out other unions in struggle on the picket lines. With the Labour Party leadership under Neil Kinnock and the TUC [Trades Union Congress] under Norman Willis openly hostile to the strike, we pointed to the urgent need to draw the left-led unions, whose leaders *claimed* to support the miners struggle, out on strike alongside the NUM. When two brief dock strikes in the summer of 1984 threatened to bring the economy to a standstill (plunging the pound sterling to an all-time low), we agitated for a fighting Triple Alliance to shut down the country through joint strike action of miners and rail and other transport workers around a series of demands in the interests of the whole trade union movement. This would have amounted to a general strike, posing the question of a struggle for power. And this is what frightened the Labour and TUC tops, "left" as well as right, more than anything else.

While tens of thousands of miners and other workers showed their contempt for Kinnock and Willis (including by lowering a noose in front of the podium when Willis appeared in Wales in 1984), [NUM leader Arthur] Scargill and prominent Labour "left" Tony Benn did not challenge these scabherders, nor did they criticise their "left" TUC allies for refusing to bring out their unions. As we wrote at the end of the strike, "In the final analysis, it was not the cops and courts that defeated the NUM; it was the fifth column in labour's ranks" (*Workers Hammer* No. 67, March 1985). The scene depicted in *Pride* of the Dulais miners marching back to work, heads unbowed, was repeated in pit villages around the country, and inspired our headline: "Thatcher Vindictive in Victory—Miners Defiant in Defeat." We drew a balance sheet of the strike:

> "The NUM leadership under Arthur Scargill took the strike about as far as it could go within a perspective of militant trade union reformism, and still it lost. Why? Because militancy alone is not enough. From day one it was clear that the NUM was up against the full power of the capitalist state. What was needed was a party of revolutionary activists rooted in the trade unions which fought tooth and nail to mobilise other unions in strike action alongside the NUM. But all Arthur Scargill had was the Labour Party, and it would rather see the NUM dead than organise to take on the bosses' state in struggle."

Pride makes no mention of the broader social and political questions at stake in

continued on page 10

Colin Clews/gayinthe80s.com

London, 1985: Lesbian and Gay Pride march. South Wales National Union of Mineworkers banner is in background.

Workers Hammer

Spartacist League/Britain banner during miners strike. We called for a Triple Alliance of miners, railway and other transport workers to shut down the country through all-out strike action.

Partisan Defense Committee
The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

29th Annual Holiday Appeal

The Partisan Defense Committee's 29th annual Holiday Appeal events raised many thousands of dollars to sustain the monthly stipend program for 15 class-war prisoners and provide holiday gifts to them and their families. Held over the last two months, fundraisers in Oakland, Chicago and New York, and smaller gatherings in Los Angeles and Toronto, drew longtime PDC supporters, youth activists and trade unionists. Notably, scores of workers in the Bay Area snapped up tickets to the Oakland fundraiser, while in Chicago the United Auto Workers civil rights committee presented a check to the PDC at that union body's Martin Luther King Jr. tribute dinner.

The Holiday Appeal took place following the nationwide outpouring of protest against racist cop terror touched off by the refusal of grand juries to indict the cops who killed Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Missouri. The Bay Area fundraiser was attended by a representative of the Black Friday 14, a group arrested while protesting the exoneration of Brown's killer on November 28. Those activists had briefly stopped Bay Area Rapid Transit trains between San Francisco and Oakland (see page 9).

With the stipend program, which began in 1986, the PDC regularly sends money to the class-war prisoners, men and women locked up for their opposition to racist capitalist tyranny. The $50 monthly stipends are not charity but basic acts of working-class solidarity, a reminder to the class-war prisoners that they are not forgotten. The prisoners use these funds to buy basic necessities like food, or to pursue literary and artistic endeavors that help ameliorate the living hell of prison life.

The class-war prisoners have spent decades behind bars, singled out for standing up to the system of exploitation and oppression. Mumia Abu-Jamal spent three decades on death row, and now remains condemned to life in prison without parole. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the MOVE organization and award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless," Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer.

Other class-war prisoners include Leonard Peltier, the American Indian Movement activist framed up in the 1975 killing of two FBI agents, and Albert Woodfox, who has languished in solitary confinement for decades in retaliation for organizing a Black Panther Party chapter in Louisiana's Angola prison and fighting the wretched conditions there. Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning were part of the Ohio 7, a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s and '80s. Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa were leaders of the Omaha National Committee to Combat Fascism. Like so many other former Black Panther supporters, the two were targets of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO program, which left 38 Panthers dead.

Hugo Pinell, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison, is a militant anti-racist activist who led struggles for prisoner rights. A year ago, he was transferred from Pelican Bay solitary, where hunger strikes drew attention to the torture of such isolation. His daughter, Allegra Taylor, read a letter from Pinell to the Oakland Holiday Appeal (see page 9), and concluded: "It is my dad's wish that *every* solitary confinement unit throughout the world, not just the state of California, be *shut down*."

Several of the class-war prisoners took note of the recent anti-police brutality protests in their letters to the Holiday Appeal. Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club speakers at the events linked the struggles of the prisoners with those of today, seeking to educate a new generation of fighters in the lessons of the past. Above all is the vital precept that the capitalist state, with its repressive machinery of the police, courts and prisons, cannot be reformed to serve the interests of working people.

The PDC is guided by the class-struggle defense work of the International Labor Defense (ILD) of James P. Cannon, who went on to become a founder of American Trotskyism, in the 1920s. The ILD's stipend program initially included over 100 class-war prisoners. Among them were California labor leaders Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, framed up for a bombing at the Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco during World War I in 1916, and Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, immigrant anarchist workers executed in 1927 for a robbery/murder they did not commit. The list of ILD stipend recipients grew rapidly to include striking Passaic textile workers, as well as Illinois miners whose fights with the bosses over wages pitted them head-on against the KKK.

The prisoners in the PDC program are drawn heavily from the ranks of fighters against racial oppression, which is woven into the social fabric of this capitalist society. The PDC is prepared to defend, as was Cannon's ILD before it, "any member of the workers movement, regardless of his views, who suffered persecution by the capitalist courts because of his activities or his opinion" (Cannon, *First Ten Years of American Communism*, 1962). Affiliated to the early Communist Party, the ILD fused the militant traditions of the Industrial Workers of the World (that popularized the injunction "An injury to one is an injury to all!") with the internationalism of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. That revolution was made not just for Russian workers but for the workers and the oppressed of the entire world.

We stand unconditionally on the side of working people and their allies in struggle against capitalist savagery. As the SL speaker Marianne Clemens observed at the Oakland fundraiser: "The fight to defend these heroic class-war prisoners is integral to the fight to overthrow capital. In the end, our work links them with the struggle to forge the multiracial revolutionary Leninist party that can lead the workers to victory, open the prison doors and uproot this rotten, death-dealing capitalist system once and for all."

With sorrow and bitterness, we reported in *WV* No. 1060 (23 January) that Phil Africa, a longtime stipend recipient, died at the State Correctional Institution in Dallas, Pennsylvania, on January 10. Phil had been incarcerated since he was framed up, along with eight other MOVE family members, for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer during the 1978 cop siege of MOVE's Powelton Village home. We will keep Phil's memory alive by continuing to fight for all class-war prisoners.

We were honored to welcome Lynne Stewart as a speaker at the New York Holiday Appeal on January 24. A leftist attorney who had for over three decades defended Black Panthers, left radicals and many others reviled by the capitalist state, Stewart herself was imprisoned in 2009, the victim of a "war on terror" show trial. She was convicted of giving material support to terrorism because she had communicated a client's views to Reuters news service. That client was a blind Egyptian Islamic fundamentalist cleric who had been convicted in an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. Her conviction set a precedent for tearing up the basic right to counsel.

Diagnosed with terminal Stage IV breast cancer, Stewart had her sentence vindictively quadrupled at the instigation of the Obama administration. The 75-year-old Stewart remained unbowed and was finally granted a compassionate release from a federal prison hospital in Texas at the end of 2013. While in prison,

Free All Class-War Prisoners!

WV Photo

Leftist attorney and former class-war prisoner Lynne Stewart, with husband Ralph Poynter, addresses Holiday Appeal in New York City, January 24.

In Memory of Samiya (Goldii) Davis Abdullah

It is with sadness that we inform our readers of the untimely death on December 17 of 36-year-old Samiya Abdullah after a protracted struggle with cancer. She was the daughter of Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost political prisoner, who has been incarcerated since he was framed up for the shooting death of a Philadelphia cop in 1981, when Samiya was just two years old. Samiya was a fighter for her father's freedom. In a moving tribute, Mumia observed:

> "For most of the activist world she was Goldii, a rapper and activist whose sweet voice could strike like bricks when she cracked into rap or sang a song. To us she was Sami, short for Samiya, a brilliant, sparkling young woman who never ceased to surprise us. She was many things: daughter, mother, student, activist, artist, orator, rapper, graduate and more. To us she was the baby, the youngest, and as such she had a special shine."
>
> —"Samiya Abdullah Makes Transition" by Mumia Abu-Jamal, 19 December 2014 (transcribed from Prison Radio)

He also spoke of Samiya's incredible fortitude in graduating with a master's degree while undergoing wrenching cancer treatment.

The PDC has sent a donation to Mumia's wife Wadiya to help with expenses at this terrible time. Readers who want to assist the family in caring for Goldii's two young daughters can send donations made payable to Wadiya Jamal to: P.O. Box 19404, Kingsessing Postal Station, Philadelphia, PA 19143-9998.

WV Photo

Goldii speaking at PDC-initiated rally demanding freedom for Mumia, New York City, 28 March 2008.

Drop All Charges Against Black Friday 14!

Oakland

We print below a letter from the Partisan Defense Committee protesting the charges against 14 black activists who were arrested for temporarily stopping Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) trains at the West Oakland station. The action was part of nationwide protests on Black Friday against the non-indictment of the Ferguson cop who gunned down Michael Brown in broad daylight.

Hundreds, including representatives of the unions that organize BART workers, came out to a BART Board of Directors meeting on January 22 to demand that the charges be dropped. A supporter of the PDC read from a letter he had sent to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Exposing BART management's cynical claim that by going after the protesters they were protecting riders from "potentially dangerous actions," the letter pointed to the coldblooded execution of a 22-year-old black man, Oscar Grant, by a BART cop on New Year's Day 2009. It also raised the death of two of management's own scabs, killed by a scab-operated train during the bosses' offensive against the 2013 BART strike.

The Black Friday 14 are calling for people to rally outside their next court appearance—scheduled for 8:15 a.m. on February 4, at 661 Washington St. in Oakland—as well as at the February 12 BART Board of Directors meeting.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee demands an end to the vindictive prosecution of the Black Friday 14 who are being dragged through the court for participating in a November 28 protest at the West Oakland BART Station against police killings of black people. Outrageously, in addition to the charges of criminal trespass, these protesters also face having to pay up to $70,000 in "retribution" to BART management.

Tens of thousands of people across the U.S. have rallied in opposition to racist cop terror. Like the state's witchhunt against demonstrators in New York City, the transparent purpose of the charges against the Black Friday 14 is an attempt to intimidate and silence any protest against rampant police repression. We demand that all the charges be dropped as well as efforts to extort tens of thousands of dollars in payment to BART management.

she was a stipend recipient. Her husband Ralph Poynter, who joined her at the event this year, frequently spoke to her case at past Holiday Appeals. Her remarks at this year's event are excerpted below, along with those of SL and SYC representatives.

To support the work of the PDC, send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.

* * *

Max, New York
Spartacus Youth Club

Many of the young activists who have been ignited in just outrage over cop killings are buying into the illusion of police reform. They look to the federal government to do the right thing and to punish the people who are doing its dirty work. Politicians and their reformist hangers-on lamely call for police body cameras. But Eric Garner's death was captured on video, from the beginning of his harassment to his final words, "I can't breathe." Ramsey Orta, the man who filmed this execution, was thrown in jail on bogus charges. We say: Drop the charges against Ramsey Orta now!

Some demonstrators have called for "state and federal oversight of all police officers." Eric Holder's Justice Department went through the motions of a civil rights investigation, only to let Mike Brown's killer off the hook yet again. This is the same federal government that tortures and rains death on thousands of people around the world. This government sent Chelsea Manning to rot in prison for exposing just a fraction of these crimes. Drop all charges against anti-police brutality protesters! Free Chelsea Manning! Free all the class-war prisoners!...

With black oppression rooted in this system of production for profit, cop terror is used by America's rulers to maintain the forcible segregation of the black masses at the bottom of society. Efforts to reform the police cannot change its fundamentally anti-working-class and racist nature. The cause of black freedom will be a great driving force in the struggle for a socialist America and a great achievement of workers revolution. When those who labor rule, ripping the economy out of the hands of the capitalist rulers, and reorganize it on a socialist basis, only then will the wealth of this country be used for the benefit of those who produced it. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society.

There is no future for youth in the capitalist system, an irrational and inherently racist system based on the exploitation of working people at home and abroad. The only way out of this hell is through workers revolution. This will he achieved through the struggle of the multiracial working class, under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard party.

The SYC fights for free, quality, integrated public education for all! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! We want to win the best of the militant black and multiracial youth, who think the chant "Hands up don't shoot" doesn't cut it. We say: "Fists up for class struggle!" We say to those fed up with con men, fed up with cold-blooded killings deemed "justifiable homicide," to those looking for "justice": you must start with the program of revolutionary Marxism, that is, Trotskyism. For black liberation through socialist revolution! Join the SYC!

Lynne Stewart

I want to say a very, very heartfelt thank you, thank you, thank you. It was the people who got behind me when I first arrived in a federal prison hospital, and made sure that they so intimidated the administration by all the mail I received—don't forget to sign the cards [greetings to the prisoners]—that they moved me to a floor where I had much better care. I didn't have to climb three flights of stairs just to eat every day, where I could go to the library, etc. But that was all due to the tremendous pressure that began and built from the people outside, of which you were a very, very strong part.

I know you made Ralph and me into a tag team. I would write the blog and he would accept the speaking engagement on any form of media that was available. But I can't express to you what it meant when those petitions kept growing and growing and growing, demanding my release, on the basis of compassionate release, which it was, and which eventually, to the greatest surprise of Ralph and me, actually worked. Because we've been in this movement a long time, 50 years—well, he's in longer than I am, but I've heen in 50 years—and you keep on plugging, you keep on keeping your finger in the dike.

continued on page 11

Greetings from the Class-War Prisoners

Many of the class-war prisoner stipend recipients wrote greetings to the PDC Holiday Appeal fundraisers, where they were displayed. We print below excerpts from some of those greetings, noting with sadness that MOVE member Phil Africa died on January 10.

Phil Africa

29 November 2014

I hope all are doing well and staying strong out there like I know yall are. Family & self are also all doing strong thanks to JOHN AFRICA. I just wanted to send a short greeting to let everyone know that we in THE MOVE ORGANIZATION sincerely appreciate all the hard work yall continuously do year round and for every one. From backing the dock workers who refuse to load or unload materials for this systems war machines, to giving a voice to the teachers who are gravely under paid and still give their all to teaching the children of the masses. Then there are the average workers who have to fight just to get a raise in the minimum wage so that they can care for families, while this empire spends billions of tax dollars on their war machine aimed at world domination! I use many of the Workers Vanguard & other PDC puhlications to help open the eyes of those behind these walls who are still blind to the crimes this system is guilty of and commits against them daily. MOVE understands the energy, the commitment it takes to be on the front line of struggle 24-7 and we give you all our "On The Move!" for the effort yall put into doing that work.

Jaan Laaman

[audio greeting]
3 December 2014

I am sending you these greetings from out here in the Sonoran Desert, at the US penitentiary in Tucson.

I am glad I can join with all of you at these events, even with just these words.

4strugglemag

I'd certainly love to be sitting there next to you, listening and participating. The PDC's work, its solidarity and support for U.S. political prisoners, is significant and necessary. Each of you here tonight, your support for this work, your solidarity with those of us behind the walls, is important and we welcome your solidarity.

This past year the PDC increased the material support it sends and I will say, this has heen a real help in my day to day life.

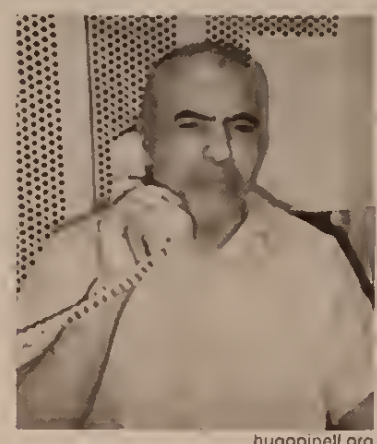
The killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson has fired up the issue of killer cops and government repression across the country. We may be, and I hope we are, witnessing the emergence of a new mass movement of popular resistance. The PDC, with its 29 year history of struggle against cops, the klan, prisons and more, is in a good position to participate and offer some insight and advice to this present activism.

Before I conclude, let me remind everyone to check out 4strugglemag, at www.4strugglemag.org, which is the primary voice of political prisoners in the U.S. Issue 24 is up now—we also print hard copies. 4SM will be going to a new print schedule (twice a year) in 2015, hut we will be increasing our online editions.

Hugo Pinell

17 Novemher 2014

Warm greetings, best of love and health. Since my last open statement to you, in Nov. of 2013, I was transferred to this SHU in New Folsom, in Jan. of 2014. For me, this place is better because it is



hugopinell.org

closer to the Bay Area and it is easier for my mom, my daughter, my family and other true loved ones to visit with me on a more regular basis. The visits remain non-contact, but it is a true blessing to have my mom alive still, able to visit often as she has done for the 50 years I've been in the Calif. Department of Corrections.

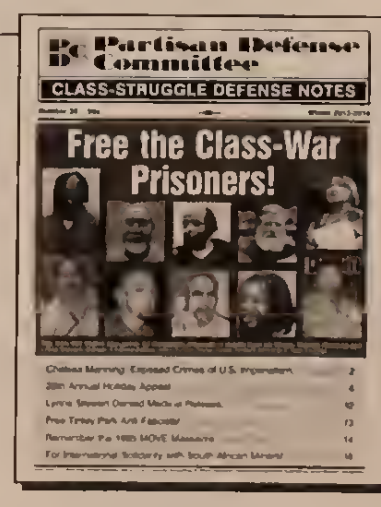
I appeared before the parole board, in May, and they denied me 5 more years which shocked and hurt me deeply because I really expected to be released immediately or in one year. It's been harder to shake these hurt feelings but, aside from the beautiful and powerful energies I receive from those ahove mentioned, I must also include your loving and caring energies, along with those from the Partisan Committee, for you have been with me for the last 28 years, and I use this tremendous force to stay healthy, all around, and to keep on pushing, growing, and enhancing the qualities of the new man I started building decades ago, when I joined the liberation movement. So, I'm doing and feeling better.

Ed Poindexter

17 November 2014

I turned 70 on November 1, and it reminded me that the PDC has been an avid and generous support for a number of years. Decades, in fact.

As my mental processes begin to slow down a tad, I still remain convinced that I can make a difference in this world. And I also remember who has been in my corner, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your continued support.■



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East Ukraine...

(continued from page 1)

Ukraine or independence or unification with Russia. After the vote, we wrote: "We defend the democratic right of the population in these areas to conduct the referendum and act on the vote for self-rule" ("U.S. Imperialism Behind Bloody Repression in Ukraine," *WV* No. 1046, 16 May 2014). This position is an expression of our support for the democratic right of national self-determination, i.e., the right of peoples to amalgamate or to separate. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin underlined, the recognition of the right of self-determination is essential to combating national antagonisms and creating conditions where working people of different nations are able to see that the real enemy is their respective capitalist exploiters, not each other.

The imperialists blather on about "Russian aggression" to mask their own predatory appetites. A compliant U.S. capitalist media has done its part, parroting claims that the Russian army is engaged in combat in Ukraine while all but disappearing the presence of American mercenaries and neo-Nazis from West Europe fighting alongside the Ukrainian army. In truth, Putin has been quite restrained in the face of repeated provocations by the Kiev government and its imperialist patrons. There is little indication that Moscow has annexationist appetites toward the eastern Ukrainian provinces.

Those in Kiev pressing the military conflict are desperate for whatever imperialist assistance they can get. The Ukrainian army recently launched its fourth conscription drive since last March, and has plans for two more drafts, which will sweep up mainly working-class and poor people. There have been numerous protests against conscription, mostly led by women furious that their sons and husbands are being made cannon fodder. Many potential conscripts are hiding in forests and fleeing the country to avoid the draft. Ukraine's Defense Ministry announced at the end of January that nearly 7,500 people are facing criminal charges for draft evasion.

The real shock troops of the Ukrainian army are fascist-dominated volunteer units accused of carrying out rape, kidnapping and murder across the Donbass. Among these are the Aidar and Azov battalions, the latter of which sports insignia based on the Black Sun and the Wolf's Hook (*Wolfsangel*) emblems of the Nazi SS. When the Kiev government announced a "rebranding" of the Aidar battalion at the end of January, the fascists attempted to storm the Ministry of Defense in protest. These scum, politically represented by the Right Sector and Svoboda, trace their lineage back to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) of Stepan Bandera that collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. The UPA is notorious for its mass murders of Jews, Communists, Soviet soldiers and Poles. In a salute to the fascists, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko established a national holiday, the Day of Ukraine's Defenders, on October 14—the anniversary of the UPA's founding.

Reuters map (adapted by WV)

Imperialist Sanctions and Unintended Consequences

In cutting off access to international capital, the imperialist sanctions have compounded the damage done by the collapse in oil prices to the Russian economy, which is heavily dependent on oil and natural gas exports. Oil is fetching less than half the price it did a year ago due in no small part to increased production in the U.S. and continuing high production in Saudi Arabia. The value of the ruble against the dollar plummeted by 46 percent last year and another 17 percent in January, while inflation has soared to 13 percent. With the costs of food and medicine in particular skyrocketing, working people and retirees are scrambling to get by.

Differences are growing, especially in the EU, over continuing the sanctions. At the beginning of the year, French president François Hollande expressed a desire to ease sanctions if some basis for compromise could be found. In echoing this sentiment, German Social Democrat Sigmar Gabriel, vice chancellor in Angela Merkel's Christian Democrat-led government, expressed concern that some want the sanctions to "cripple" Russia.

Such statements reflect the worries of sections of Europe's capitalist rulers that the more effective the sanctions are, the more they could threaten their own beleaguered economies. Several countries in the EU, notably its dominant power Germany, have extensive trade links with Russia and rely on fossil fuel imports from that country. Furthermore, the continued fall in the value of the ruble raises the prospect that Russia could default on its debts, which would be yet another blow to Europe's struggling banks.

The recent election victory of the petty-bourgeois Syriza party in Greece also briefly raised the prospect of a speed bump for the EU sanctions regimen. Elected on promises to roll back the grinding EU-enforced austerity that has impoverished Greece and driven unemployment to over 25 percent (around 50 percent among youth), Syriza had also expressed opposition to sanctions against Russia. But just three days after its formation, the capitalist government led by Syriza joined the rest of the EU in unanimously agreeing to extend the existing sanctions for another six months and to prepare a list of other individual Russians to target.

Syriza's denunciation of the austerity diktats (and sanctions on Russia) is shown to be so much hot air by its support to the imperialist EU. Originally established as an economic battering ram against the Soviet Union, the EU remains the vehicle by which the European capitalists jointly exploit the European workers. Its weaker states like Greece are lorded over by its more powerful imperialist members, who also gain competitive advantage from the EU trade bloc at the expense of their imperialist rivals, the U.S. and Japan. In the Greek elections, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece called for "no vote to Syriza" and gave critical support to the Communist Party, which stood in opposition to the EU and all pro-EU parties, including Syriza. ***Down with the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!***

Russia is not now imperialist, although it has the potential to become so (however remote that prospect appears today). A regional power, Russia has significant military might, especially its nuclear arsenal, making it harder for the U.S. to push around. But Moscow does not play a role in the carve-up of the world on a global scale. The efforts of the existing imperialists, led by the U.S., to keep Russia out of their club have stymied its imperialist ambitions. Washington's increased bellicosity toward Russia comes in the context of its so-called pivot to Asia, strengthening ties with India and other maneuvers aimed at containing the Chinese deformed workers state. Such moves reflect the overriding concern of the U.S. imperialists to effect a counterrevolution in China, where capitalism was overthrown following the 1949 Revolution, in order to reopen that country to untrammeled imperialist exploitation.

However, the attempts to isolate Russia have served to push it into China's arms, an illustration of the U.S. rulers' difficulties in pursuing their strategic interests around the world. Russia's fossil fuels and high-grade military technology could both fill needs in China, which in turn has massive foreign exchange reserves. Russia's vast land mass also provides a major route for China's project of a New Silk Road for trade with Europe that avoids the threat of U.S. naval disruption of shipping lanes.

In contrast to Merkel's Atlanticism, a wing of the German bourgeoisie favors an economic and political alliance with

Reuters

Fascist-dominated Azov battalion on "Day of Ukraine's Defenders," with Nazi SS *Wolfsangel* emblem on banner, demand ban of Communist Party, 14 October 2014.

Spartacus Youth Club Events

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, February 18, 7 p.m.

Capitalism to Communism: A Marxist Understanding of the State

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 3150

Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Monday, February 9, 7 p.m.

The Russian Revolution of 1917, Part 1

CCNY, NAC Rm. TBA
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)

Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL website: **www.icl-fi.org**

TORONTO

Thursday, February 26, 6:30 p.m.

Down With Ottawa's "Anti-Terror" Laws!

"War on Terror": Marauding Abroad, Repression at Home

U of T, OISE, Room 2199
252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)

Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, February 25, 6:30 p.m.

From Ferguson to Vancouver: Down With Racist Cop Terror!

University of British Columbia
Irving Barber Learning Centre, Rm. 315

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Pride...

(continued from page 7)

the strike, aside from a seemingly jocular exclamation by Steph when the LGSM is founded: "Terrific—let's bring down the government!" The film does not indicate that Mark Ashton was actually a leading figure in the Young Communist League. Yet, as Ray Goodspeed, one of the founding members of LGSM, told [the left group] rs21 (21 September 2014): "Of the eleven people who started LGSM, we were all either Trotskyists, communists or very close friends of communists." Goodspeed was then a longtime member of the Militant group, which was buried deep inside Kinnock's Labour Party. Goodspeed acknowledges that Militant "had a very dismissive position on gay rights." One wing of the divided Communist Party openly braintrusted for Kinnock (and later [Tony] Blair) while the other acted as "left" apologists for the Labour/TUC tops. Many groups on the left shared Thatcher's visceral hatred for the Soviet Union and/or joined her in calling for a strikebreaking "ballot" after the strike was already underway.

Sectoralism—be it feminism, nationalism or gay lifestylism—accommodates the divisions fostered by the capitalist ruling class and undermines the struggle against special oppression. The closing scene of *Pride*, as hundreds of Welsh miners and their families pour out of coaches to proudly place themselves, marching bands and all, at the head of the 1985 Gay Pride parade in London, points symbolically to another alternative: that of the organised working class standing at the head of all the oppressed. That sort of unity can be achieved only under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party that acts as a Leninist tribune of the people, championing the rights of gays, women, ethnic and national minorities and all the exploited and oppressed as part of the struggle for workers revolution. ■

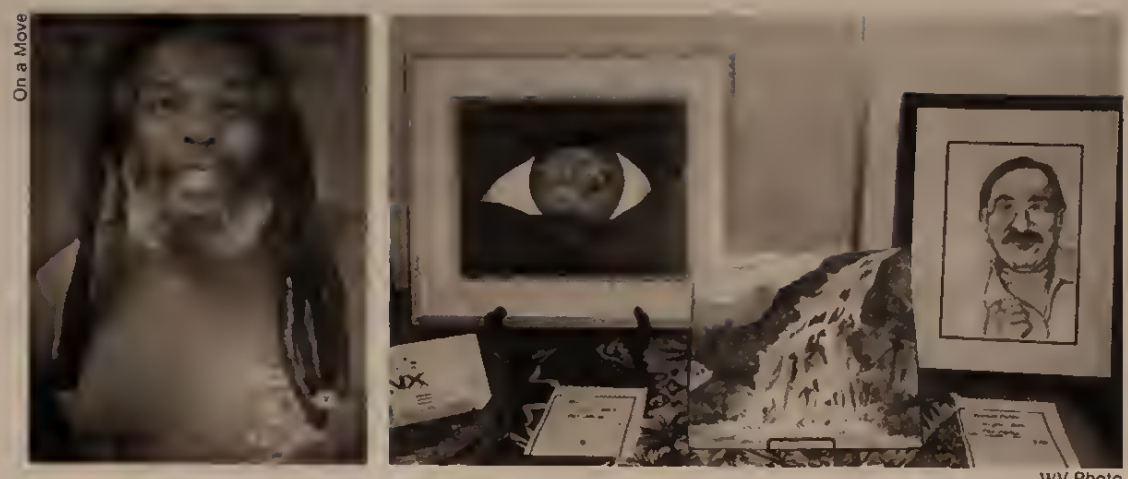
Holiday Appeal...

(continued from page 9)

And you do everything you can, and you just say, "Well, something's gonna work someday." And then when it does, it's a revelation. That's all I can say, it really is a revelation....

We have a lot to do, there's no question about that. But I'm just glad I can step up again and do that. And of course, having been behind those walls, I understand how dehumanizing it is to be beset every day hy what is arbitrary authority. Just as these young people were stopped by cops and confronted arbitrary authority, to their detriment, and ended up dead, so in jail every day that arbitrary authority wears on you. It's a guard who says "A" on Thursday, and on Friday he's saying "B." And you say, "But you said," and he says, "Don't tell me what." Anything and everything is operational. You can be written up for anything. And that is brain numhing and it is mind killing and it is heartbreaking.

And as I say, I have never met anyone who got out of jail who didn't feel that the worst thing was leaving the people behind them, that you could not go back and somehow rescue all of them. Because so many of them deserve to be rescued, not necessarily because of the crime they committed, or they were innocent, or any of that, but because they were treated so badly by this system, which your young Spartacist so eloquently described, that this system betrayed them from the moment they were born, and that they have never gotten recompense for that....



On a Move

Phil Africa, class-war prisoner who died behind bars on January 10, donated art work for Bay Area Holiday Appeal event.

WV Photo

When I was in jail, I got a poem that Ed [Poindexter] had written, which I actually distributed far and wide, among the women at Carswell. It was a poem about the use of the word "n---a" and how young people use the word n---er all the time: "he's my n---a," "let's do that n---a," and about how they just don't get it. They don't have the background to know what that word meant. And this poem just puts it so well, and I gave it to people and they'd come back and they'd say, "Thank you. I gave that to my friend, and we decided we're not going to do that anymore."

And I think that is the most remarkable thing: from behind the walls, these folks continue to operate politically; they continue to put out their thoughts. Jaan Laaman is another one. He puts out a magazine; he's constantly in touch with Prison Radio. Now he's a person, another name, you may not know real well. But they are worth getting to know, and I tell you, if you have the time to be a correspondent, to correspond with someone in jail is really a treat. It's a wonderful thing, because it's so important to the person in jail, and it can be so enlightening to all of us....

I have stories of women who died, literally almost before my eyes, and they died because of neglect. And so these places are death camps, as Ralph says. And it's only us, the vigilance from people on the outside, that can save the people on the inside.

Paula Daniels, Chicago Spartacist League

Obama came into office trumpeting the myth of an end to racism, declaring that the civil rights movement had brought the country 90 percent of the way to racial equality. What crap. I need only mention the names Eric Garner and Michael Brown to explode the deadly lie of an alleged post-racial America. The Grand Jury exonerations of the killer cops expose the class nature of the capitalist courts.

In this same two-week period, 12-year-old Tamir Rice and 28-year-old Akai Gurley were blown away by cops less than 48 hours apart. The bourgeoisie has made clear that the essence of the words of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Taney, delivered in the infamous Dred Scott decision nearly 160 years ago, is still very much alive. The black man has no rights a white man is bound to respect....

We are here tonight to honor a small handful of capitalism's victims, locked away for taking a stand against racism, capitalist degradation, injustice—some locked up for much longer than the 29 years that we have been sending stipends to these fighters. I would be remiss if I didn't pay tribute to the 45th anniversary of the murder of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Shot down just blocks from here almost to the day. Amid the blood and bullet holes (76 bullets from the cops, one from the Panthers), lay a copy of Lenin's *The State and Revolution* on Hampton's bed. There was no indictment for these killer cops either. The Panthers shared our desire to see capitalism smashed, though they looked toward the lumpenproletariat as the instrumentality rather than the organized working class as the agent for black freedom and socialism. For the most part, they were hunted down and imprisoned....

On the eve of the great revolutionary upheavals in Europe in 1848, British Lord Palmerston was speaking to the Austrian ambassador about the reactionary and repressive measures of the hated State Chancellor Prince Metternich. He said, "Your repressive and suffocating policy is also a fatal one and will lead to explosion just as certainly as a boiler that was hermetically sealed and deprived of an outlet for steam."

We too live in a bit of a boiler of repression and contradictions today. Though not completely hermetically sealed—there are some built in outlets. The black Democrats and preachers help blow off some steam and the trade union bureaucrats keep a lid on class struggles. All of these are obstacles to the independent mobilization of the working class to fight in our own interests. Obstacles, but not foolproof. In Ferguson, Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton clearly had lost some credibility, receiving boos and catcalls from protesting youth. That's a good thing. However, absent a class struggle perspective, this anger will only be recycled back into the dead end of pressuring the "powers that be" to behave in a more just and humane manner....

Help us build the multiracial revolutionary workers party dedicated to fighting for black liberation, women's liberation, and lead the struggle to free the working class and the oppressed across the globe from the chains of exploitation, poverty, and imperialist war. Those who labor must rule! ■

Free Sundiata Acoli!

The grotesque vindictiveness of the racist rulers against the courageous black radicals who joined the Black Panther Party decades ago knows no bounds. Like so many other militants, Sundiata Acoli was railroaded to prison, together with Assata Shakur (see "Hands Off Assata Shakur!" *WV* No. 1059, January 9). The two were framed up for killing a cop following a 1973 ambush by New Jersey state troopers, during which one of the cops died from his own revolver's bullet. While Shakur escaped prison hell in 1979 and fled to Cuba, where she still resides, Acoli has been in prison for over 40 years.

Last September 29, a judicial panel ordered that Acoli—now 77 years old—be released on parole, reversing a 2011 parole board decision. In its order, the court noted that the parole board had "acted arbitrarily and capriciously" by dismissing evidence favorable to Acoli and ignoring positive psychological test results. Over the years, Acoli's parole had been denied repeatedly on the basis of his radical political views and activities.

Acoli still rots in an American dungeon. Immediately after the court ruling, the New Jersey State attorney general and the parole board announced plans to appeal it, indefinitely postponing Acoli's release. The Partisan Defense Committee demands: Freedom for Sundiata Acoli, now! ■

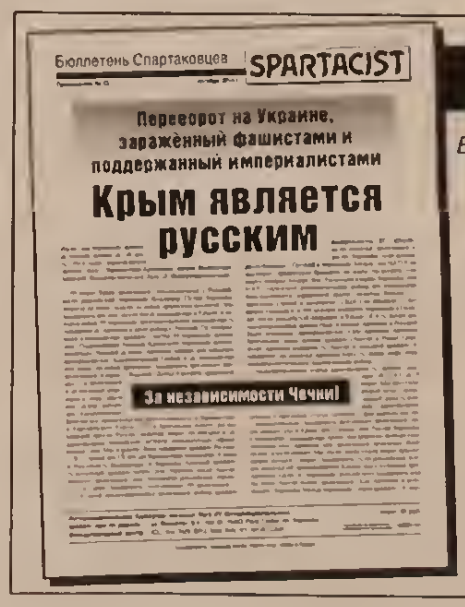
Russia (shades of Otto von Bismarck) as a counterweight to U.S. global hegemony. Meanwhile, trade between Germany and China has increased dramatically in recent years. The prospect of an Eurasian alliance was addressed by the rad-lib journalist Pepe Escobar in a December 16 article titled "Go West, Young Han" on tomdispatch.com: "One day, Germany may lead parts of Europe away from NATO's 'logic,' since German business leaders and industrialists have an eye on their potentially lucrative commercial future in a new Eurasia. Strange as it might seem amid today's war of words over Ukraine, the endgame could still prove to involve a Berlin-Moscow-Beijing alliance."

Much of the reformist left in the U.S. and internationally went along with its own capitalist rulers in supporting the coup in Ukraine last year. Typical was the International Socialist Organization, which hailed the reactionary demonstrations in the Maidan as an "action from below." Other groups, like the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), of which Socialist Alternative is the U.S. section, have gone to greater pains to strike a neutral posture between the imperialists and the Russian-backed rebels, but in fact also give left cover for the imperialists.

In a January 21 article titled "Facing a Turbulent 2015" on the CWI website (socialistworld.net), Rob Jones retails the imperialist lie that Russia is responsible for the fighting in Ukraine. Writing that "Russia, in words, claims to want a settlement but continues to support the rebels" while all but disappearing the role of the U.S. and EU, Jones draws an equal sign between supposed "Russian imperialism" and the real imperialists of NATO. The CWI, like all reformists, has always been at peace with imperialism, which found its greatest expression when it lined up on the side of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. CWI members in Moscow were literally standing shoulder-to-shoulder on the barricades with Boris Yeltsin's capitalist-restorationist forces when he grabbed power in August 1991.

At every level, what is going on in Ukraine is the product of the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet hurcaucratically degenerated workers state and ravaged the economies and peoples of the former Soviet republics. The Ukrainian economy, which had been integrated into an all-Union economic division of labor, was dealt a severe blow as living standards plummeted. We in the International Communist League fought politically tooth and nail to defend the Soviet Union against capitalist counterrevolution. Despite its degeneration under the misrule of the Stalinist hureaucracy that had usurped political power in 1923-24, the USSR embodied the social gains of the 1917 October Revolution led by Lenin's Bolsheviks.

The seizure of power by the proletariat in Russia was a beacon pointing the way to a future free of exploitation and oppression. All that the imperialist system offers for the masses is greater poverty and misery, with increasing conflicts among nations and peoples who hope to better their prospects at others' cost. It is necessary to build revolutionary workers parties internationally, sections of a reforged Fourth International, to make the working class conscious of the need to combat the depredations of its own bourgeoisie. Such parties will lead the proletariat in fierce struggle against all manifestations of national and religious bigotry and great power chauvinism in the fight to overturn capitalist rule through international socialist revolution. ■



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Byulleten' Spartakovtsev Supplement
No. 22, October 2014

Fascist-Infested, Imperialist-Backed Ukraine Coup
Crimea Is Russian
Independence for Chechnya!

Article translated from
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WORKERS VANGUARD

— Ferguson and the Feds —

Another Whitewash of Cop Terror

Two days after Martin Luther King Day, the Feds put out the word: Justice Department lawyers would recommend that no charges be brought against the cop Darren Wilson for gunning down unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, last August. The FBI investigation found "no evidence" that Brown's civil rights had been violated! Although the Justice Department has not yet closed the case, the message is clear: a cop's badge is a license to kill in capitalist America.

When Ferguson erupted in protest last summer, President Barack Obama sent his attorney general Eric Holder to cool things down with promises of a "rigorous and independent" civil rights investigation into Brown's killing as well as a review of the town's police department. The preachers, black Democrats and trade-union misleaders got on board, pushing illusions that federal oversight would clean up the Ferguson police. Ferguson activists in Hands Up United raised the demand for "Eric Holder to use the full resources and power of the Department of Justice to implement a nationwide investigation of systematic police brutality and harassment in black and brown communities."

We warned in a leaflet issued soon after Brown's killing:

> "There should be no illusions in the Democrats or the federal government, which oversees this rotten system that the cops 'serve and protect.' The notion that the Feds will rein in racist local law enforcement is a lie. FBI agents have been embedded in the Ku Klux Klan and involved in heinous crimes, such as the 1963 Birmingham church bombing and the 1979 Greensboro massacre of leftists and union organizers. With many in Ferguson seeking redress from a Department of Justice investigation, we warn that Attorney General Eric Holder & Co. are the top cops who step in to get people off the streets with the promise that justice may come in the sweet by-and-by, at best enacting cosmetic reforms."
>
> —"Ferguson: The Real Face of Racist Capitalist America," reprinted in *WV* No. 1051, 5 September 2014

The purpose of federal investigations of the police has never been to rein in racist cop terror, which is a daily part of life for the black and Latino masses whether or not the Feds have been in town. In Cleveland, Ohio, last year, cops gunned down 12-year-old Tamir Rice as he played in a park and then threw his 14-year-old sister to the ground and cuffed her. This after two previous federal investigations of the city's police. Indeed, the very purpose of a federal investigation is to defuse anger over police atrocities and prevent social explosions, keeping the system of capitalist exploitation running smoothly.

The law establishing the guidelines for federal civil rights investigations into local police departments was cooked up in 1991 after the sadistic beating of black motorist Rodney King by a gang of Los Angeles cops was broadcast on national television. In April 1992, a jury in state court acquitted the four officers who had actually gone to trial, and L.A. exploded. The federal government dispatched military troops, federal agents and Border Patrol officers against poor, black and Latino Los Angeles. Months later, the Feds also "investigated" whether King's civil rights had been violated. Only two of the more than a dozen cops involved were convicted and they served short sentences.

It's no accident that Obama's nominee to replace Eric Holder, Brooklyn federal prosecutor Loretta Lynch, flaunts her tough-on-crime credentials under the catchphrase "Nana's going to jail." The function of the Department of Justice—which includes the FBI and the Bureau of Prisons—is to spy on political activists, enforce the racist "war on drugs," victimize militant trade unionists and run prisons. Calling on the top overseer of the whole plantation to protect black people from his local subordinates is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse.

WV Photos

Above: Thousands march against racist cop terror, New York City, December 13. Left: Spartacist contingent at protest warns against illusions in Feds, civilian review boards.

For protesters who have taken to the streets across the country, the unrelenting cop killings have posed the question: which way forward? Given that federal oversight, civilian review boards and body cameras have made no difference, some express frustration with the Obama administration. But these activists then argue for more militant tactics...to pressure the government to clean up the police and enact other reforms to alleviate the desperate conditions of black people in America. Militancy in pursuit of the same reformist program is no answer. It is necessary to ***break*** with the strategy of pressure politics. To end police brutality and racial oppression in America requires a class-struggle fight for socialist revolution.

Activists at "Reclaim MLK" protests around the King holiday were motivated by the belief that the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. has been co-opted by the political establishment. In reality, King was always a part of that establishment, a figure whose entire political career was based on brokering reforms from the Democratic Party of Kennedy and Johnson. King was the best representative of the petty-bourgeois black leaders who advocated a program of reliance on federal intervention against the Jim Crow South. This strategy reflected fear and loathing of the poor and more militant black masses, who were beginning to organize self-defense against racist terror as part of the struggle against segregation in all spheres of life: schools, transportation, lunch counters, housing (see "On Federal Troops in Little Rock," page 2).

MLK pushed a pacifist, turn-the-other-cheek solution to corral those working-class blacks and courageous youth whose militancy was starting to escape the bounds of impotent pressure politics. And in response to the unorganized upheavals of the ghetto masses against police terror, such as occurred in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1965, King proclaimed: "It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them." King's utility to the Feds was immeasurable as an authoritative black leader whose message was to disarm, go slow, and love and trust the forces of capitalist state repression. (For more on King, see "*Selma*: The Movie and the Real Story," *WV* No. 1060, 23 January.)

It is necessary to junk the myth pushed by liberals in the current anti-police brutality protests that there was a golden age of good neighborhood policing, which could be restored today through civilian review boards and federal oversight. Those good old days existed precisely *never*. In an article titled "Stop Kidding Yourself: The Police Were Created to Control Working Class and Poor People" (lawcha.org, 29 December 2014), Sam Mitrani, author of the book *The Rise of the Chicago Police Department*, describes how "the police were not created to protect and serve the population. They were not created to stop crime, at least not as most people understand it. And they were certainly not created to promote justice." Emerging out of the bloody battles between cops and strikers in the mid-to-late 19th century, police forces were created to protect capitalism "from the threat posed by that system's offspring, the working class." In the antebellum South, the predecessors of modern police forces were the slave patrols.

Nonetheless, Mitrani retails the liberal absurdity that "a democratic police system is imaginable—one in which police are elected by and accountable to the people they patrol." The fact is that the cops' job is to defend the capitalist order through the violent repression of those capitalism exploits and oppresses. In the U.S., where capitalism had its roots in the system of chattel slavery, this violence is especially directed at black people. The cops cannot be reformed or gotten rid of short of a socialist revolution that shatters the system of wage slavery that police forces were created to defend.

The International Socialist Organization and other reformist groups were movers and shakers behind "The Gathering," an anti-police brutality conference in New York City on January 30, where the issue of police accountability got a lot of play. A Spartacist supporter argued from the floor at the conference plenary: "All this talk about community control or having negotiations with the cops or dialogue is defeatist and won't go anywhere. The point is that there is a social force in society that can actually bring change, and that is the working class." The union movement in this country was built through hard-fought strikes in which workers had to fend off cop attacks. The potential power is there. And black workers, with their ties to the ghetto masses, will form an important link between the struggle against wage slavery and the fight for black freedom.

Today, as black youth continue to fall victim to racist cop brutality across the country, the labor movement is on its knees, failing to defend the jobs and wages of its own members, much less champion the causes of the oppressed. Responsibility in no small part lies with the existing leadership of the unions, which has undermined labor's struggles and sped its decline by pledging loyalty to the profit system and tying the unions to the capitalist Democratic Party. To turn this situation around requires a political struggle against all the forces that build illusions in the agencies of the capitalist government and bourgeois politicians. We seek to win militant youth and workers away from the dead end of pressure politics, to a revolutionary proletarian perspective. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1062 20 February 2015

Shut Down All the Refineries!

Victory to Oil Workers Strike!

AP

February 7: Striking workers rally at entrance to Marathon oil refinery in Catlettsburg, Kentucky.

Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!

Some 5,200 oil refinery workers represented by the United Steelworkers (USW) are now on strike, chiefly over health and safety issues as well as the contracting out of maintenance jobs. Inadequate staffing forces workers to endure 12-hour shifts for as many as 16 days in a row, leaving them completely exhausted. Such grueling schedules are a major safety issue in this inherently dangerous industry made deadlier by corporate profit-gouging.

Even according to the bosses' own reports, a fire or explosion occurs at a refinery almost every week. In 2005, a vapor leak at the BP refinery in Texas City, Texas, ignited when a contractor attempted to start his pickup; the resulting explosion killed 15 workers and injured more than 170. A fire at the Chevron refinery in Richmond, California, in August 2012 nearly incinerated 19 employees and forced 15,000 nearby residents to seek medical treatment for respiratory and other ailments. There must be union control of safety, including the right to stop work over dangerous conditions.

Organized labor has taken one hit after another in the bosses' decades-long war on the unions. A real fight by the refinery workers—for many years organized in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) before ending up through mergers in the USW—could breathe some life into the union movement. USW members produce 64 percent of the fuel in the U.S., meaning that they have tremendous potential social power. Shutting down refinery production altogether would not only cut off the flow of profits to Big Oil but also quickly cause the gears of industry to grind to a halt, threatening the bottom line of a broad section of the U.S. capitalist class.

However, the USW bureaucracy has the union engaging in battle with both hands tied behind its back. When the national contract covering 65 oil refineries expired on February 1, the USW initially struck only nine of those facilities, in California, Texas, Kentucky and Washington state. One week later, the strike was extended to BP refineries in Whiting, Indiana, and Toledo, Ohio. The bulk of the 30,000 USW refinery workers continue to work under rolling 24-hour contract extensions,

continued on page 5

Capitalist Syriza Government: No Friend of Workers

Imperialists Squeeze Greece

FEBRUARY 16—Negotiations in Brussels broke off today when representatives of the Greek government, led by the bourgeois Syriza party, rejected demands by European Union (EU) finance ministers that Greece hew to the austerity conditions of its 240 billion euro ($272 billion) bailout, which is due to expire at the end of this month. Wracked by a prolonged economic depression, masses of Greek workers and sections of the petty bourgeoisie have been thrown into destitution as the EU bankers make them pay for the massive national debt, now almost twice the country's gross domestic product. As detailed below in a February 10 report by the Trotskyist Group of Greece, Syriza, while offering anti-austerity rhetoric, has made clear its intention to maintain Greece's use of the euro currency and membership in the EU, an imperialist trade bloc.

In a statement for the January 25 elections, our Greek comrades explained that "the EU's purpose is to enable the imperialist powers of Europe, led by Germany, to subordinate weaker capitalist countries like Greece and impose savage austerity on working people throughout Europe, including in Germany" (see "Greece: European Union Austerity Elections," *WV* No. 1060, 23 January). In contrast to the bulk of ostensible socialists, the TGG opposed voting for Syriza, "not only because it is committed to keeping Greece in the EU, which is a pledge for more hunger and joblessness, but also because it does not in any way represent the interests of the working class." The TGG called for votes to the Greek Communist Party (KKE), which stood in opposition both to the EU and to Syriza, while sharply criticizing the KKE's nationalist populism, an obstacle to revolutionary working-class consciousness.

With the EU masters demanding blood, Syriza has been able to rally mass support on the basis of national unity, something that the two previous bourgeois governments could not do. Huge demonstrations have taken place in Athens, Thessaloniki and other cities in support of the government. The main call for a protest in Athens last week made clear that the purpose of the rallies was to provide Syriza with "the best bargaining chip" for the Brussels talks.

As internationalist communists, the TGG comrades have uniquely put forward a revolutionary perspective for combating the attacks on workers and the oppressed, writing in a statement on the elections:

> "A Greek exit from the EU as a result of militant workers struggle would be an important step forward, but not a solution in itself. The crisis in Greece is part of a world economic crisis of the imperialist system, which cannot be resolved within the borders of any single country, particularly within small, dependent Greece with its low level of industry and resources. The only way forward is a series of socialist revolutions that will expropriate the bourgeoisies, including in the imperialist centers, and establish an internationally collectivized, planned economy under workers rule. For a Socialist United States of Europe!"

* * *

Syriza achieved an overwhelming victory in the January 25 elections with 36 percent of the vote. Despite the fact that Syriza spent the last couple of years, and especially the weeks before the election, furiously backpedaling on just about every piece of leftist window-dressing in its program, there are real illusions in Syriza among layers of the workers and

continued on page 3

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Measles in the U.S.

Anti-Vaxxers: A Rash of Irrationality

The current Disneyland measles outbreak has brought the benighted anti-vaccine movement back into the limelight. With measles declared eradicated in this country over a decade ago, its comeback is a direct outcome of a decline in rates of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination. Exuding unbridled individualism, parents tout their right to personal "choice" in not immunizing their own children, a choice that gambles with the health and lives of vulnerable populations like infants and the sick. Now there is the harsh reminder: measles is an extremely contagious respiratory disease that can lead to irreparable brain damage, blindness and death. So far this year, over 120 cases have been confirmed across at least 17 states.

In today's anti-Enlightenment "Age of Endarkenment," science-based medicine has lost ground to superstition and faith. The media crows over a vaccine "debate," but the only debate is between fact and fiction. The fact is that vaccines have saved the lives of countless millions across the world. Before the measles vaccine's introduction in 1963, four million cases were reported annually in the U.S. There is no better proof of the effectiveness of immunization, which made those numbers plummet to practically nil, than that measles is unknown to most young parents today. Ironically, the near disappearance of many preventable illnesses has given anti-vaxxers fodder to discount the danger of infectious diseases like measles, diphtheria or whooping cough.

Vaccine rejecters get their booster from ignorance and irrationality, a testament to this deeply religious and decaying social order. The most widespread myth is over a supposed link between the MMR vaccine and autism, a fairy tale swallowed by a sizable segment of the American population. The autism fear was bolstered by a fraudulent 1998 study in *The Lancet* concocted by "doctor" Andrew Wakefield, whose medical license was finally revoked in 2010. Multiple credible scientific studies, involving hundreds of thousands of children around the world, have found absolutely zero connection between vaccines and childhood developmental disorders. Another theory—just as fantastical—is that too many vaccines given too close together can be detrimental.

Capitalist politicians on both sides of the partisan divide pander to anti-vaccine quackery. GOP presidential hopefuls New Jersey governor Chris Christie and Kentucky Senator Rand Paul recently took center stage with an onset of "foot-in-mouth" disease. Though now backpedaling, Christie proclaimed that parents needed "some measure of choice." Paul linked vaccines to "profound mental disorders," drinking from the same Kool-Aid as Michele Bachmann, who in 2011 asininely asserted that the HPV vaccine causes mental retardation. That vaccine, which protects against cervical cancer, has puritanical politicians howling about innocent teens turning into sex machines.

With measles cases continuing to climb, Democrats masquerade as champions of vaccination. But on February 3 President Obama proposed slashing $50 million from an immunization program covering millions of the poor and uninsured. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Obama said the relationship between vaccines and autism was "inconclusive," while Hillary Clinton pledged to investigate the matter.

Nearly half of Americans believe God created mankind in a single day less than 10,000 years ago, so anti-science baloney is hardly limited to radical evangelists. Opposition to vaccines makes strange bedfellows of small-government libertarians, anti-Big Pharma conspiracy theorists and well-heeled tree-huggers. "Alternative" medicine philistines swear that vaccines are harmful to the body, fancying a diet of organic kale and reiki therapy as a means to combat lethal microbes. Many prefer to expose their kids to deadly viruses through the notion of "natural" immunity—which is about as safe as inviting Hannibal Lecter over for dinner. Celebrity zealots like Jenny McCarthy, with her big-money affiliate Generation Rescue, went from fringe to fad after getting repeated airtime on Oprah and other talk shows. And while there are plenty of reasons to hate the profit-gouging pharmaceutical giants, the production of vaccines isn't one of them.

The measles resurgence originated in California, where there are pockets with sickeningly low vaccination rates. One of 19 states permitting "personal belief" exemptions, California allows parents to enlist a "naturopath" as the doctor excusing them from mandatory vaccine requirements. At several wealthy schools, concentrated in West Los Angeles, up to 60 percent of children are unvaccinated, a figure that rivals South Sudan. Meanwhile, the state with the highest vaccination rate is Mississippi, known for its poverty and dismal health care. It has the strictest immunization laws in the country, along with West Virginia, allowing only medical exemptions.

Anti-vaccine crusaders would let millions contract preventable diseases like measles, which kills 400 people a day across the globe, especially in the imperialist-subjugated Third World, where access to vaccines, antibiotics and clean water is limited. At the same time, granola crunchers and Tea Partyers certainly make no bones about the full vaccination schedule mandated for immigrants and green-card seekers in this country. One viral tweet by Nigerian author Elnathan John mocked the racist hysteria in the U.S. around the recent Ebola epidemic in West Africa: "Our thoughts are with the measles-ravaged country America. I hope we are screening them before they come to Africa."

"Personal" health choices involve things like picking a toothpaste, since cavities are not contagious. But getting vaccinated is about protecting the individual and everyone else as well. The collective effectiveness of vaccines depends on a large enough portion of the population being immunized. When there's a critical drop in vaccination rates, immunity crumbles.

In the spirit of doctors' Hippocratic oath to "do no harm," personal and religious belief exemptions should be scrapped. Life-saving vaccines should be mandated and, like all health care needs, freely available to all. As Marxists, we defend science against religious and superstitious obscurantism as part of fighting for a socialist future in which the wealth, resources, scientific developments and medical technology of society are put to the service of the many, not the profits of the few. Only then will we be able to build a world, freed of medieval and crippling backwardness, where human life, worth and dignity matter. ■

AFP

Ignorance on parade: "Generation Rescue" rally in Washington, D.C., July 2005.

U.S. Capitalism and Black Oppression

In a 1933 document, Max Shachtman, then a leader of American Trotskyism, explained that the racial oppression of black people serves as a fundamental prop of capitalist class rule and can only be overcome with the multiracial proletariat seizing power through socialist revolution.

TROTSKY

LENIN

With all the discrimination practiced against him, the American Negro has brought forward gifted men and women in the scientific, artistic, political and cultural world, men and women of talent and genius. It is a tribute to the race that these talents have emerged from the abyss of slavery in which they were kept for hundreds of years and from the purgatory of social, economic and political inequality where they have since been kept. They have risen in spite of the lack of educational opportunities, in spite of the barring of every door to their race, in spite of the hounding and harassment and insult and violence to which they are subject.

But the ruling class is in urgent need of the theory of racial inferiority. The historical background for it is the condition of chattel slavery once imposed upon the Negro. The difference in the economic, and consequently social, status of Negro and white upon which the ideology of inferiority was constructed has since been eliminated, but the ideology has outlived the foundation on which it was built. The bourgeoisie needs this theory for two reasons: first, it affords them a moral justification for the super-exploitation and persecution to which it subjects the Negro. If trifling sums are allocated for Negro education, he is, after all, "only a n[----]r"; if housing conditions are abominable, if the Negro is scandalously underpaid, if he is deprived of every democratic right, he is, after all, an inferior who does not deserve or require any better; if he is hanged from a tree and riddled with bullets, or soaked with oil and burned to death by a mob of savages, it is, after all, "only a n[----]r" who suffers. Secondly, the theory of racial *inferiority* is of invaluable assistance to the ruling class when it permeates the white workers. It serves to erect walls of prejudice between black and white wage slaves, to keep them divided, to pit the one against the other so that they may not pit their joint strength against their common adversary....

The militant proletariat inscribes upon its banner in this country the uncompromising demand for full and equal rights for the oppressed Negro, so that he may rise out of the position of debasement and the backwardness to which he has been forced by a decadent ruling class to the level of human dignity and consciousness that will make him the invaluable comrade-in-arms of the white proletariat. In their joint struggle for the proletarian revolution, they will sweep away the abominable structure of imperialist capitalism, rooting out the barbarous remnants of slavery and serfdom, and abolishing the poisonous system of caste inequality, ostracism, misery and exploitation under which the millions of American Negroes suffer today. Any other road is a deception, leading through mirages to the brink of the precipice. The proletarian revolution is the road to freedom.

—Max Shachtman, "Communism and the Negro" (1933), reprinted as *Race and Revolution* (Verso, 2003)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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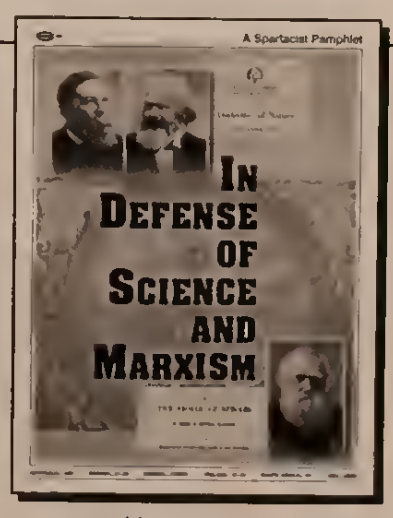
The closing date for news in this issue is February 17.

No. 1062 **20 February 2015**

CORRECTION

The article "The Police and the 1918-19 German Revolution" (*WV* No. 1060, 23 January) identified the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) and the Workers International League (WIL) as successors of the British Militant tendency. In fact, following the 1992 split in the Militant tendency, the minority formed the International Marxist Tendency, of which the WIL is the U.S. section. The majority retained CWI as the name of its international.



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Greece...

(continued from page 1)

the oppressed. The fact that a party other than PASOK [bourgeois Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement] or [the right-wing] New Democracy won an election after 40 years is seen as a blow to the Greek "oligarchs" and their system of patronage and corruption. It is also seen as a source of national pride that Greece stood up to the imperialists, especially Germany, and voted in a party that the Troika (European Central Bank, European Commission and IMF) didn't want in power.

At the same time that Greece supposedly shifted hard to the left, it is significant and very ominous that the fascist Golden Dawn took third place in the election despite the fact that its leadership is in prison and they couldn't mount much of a campaign. It is also significant that the KKE slightly increased its percentage of the vote compared to the June 2012 national elections, indicating that it has a solid base of electoral support among those on the left who oppose the EU.

Since 2012, Syriza has gone from supposedly rejecting the Troika's austerity memorandum to wanting to erase only a portion of Greece's debt to now proposing a mere debt swap scheme. Thus, Syriza's promises to bring an end to austerity and reassert Greece's national sovereignty are in practice increasingly hollow.

However, Syriza's continued anti-austerity rhetoric and the popular perception that it is standing up to those who have treated Greece like a colony of Germany has much more sway with the population right now than the imperialist propaganda trying to scare Greeks into submitting to continued austerity for fear of a "Grexit" [exit from the eurozone]. Approval ratings for the government were at over 70 percent earlier this week. And Syriza truly has become a bourgeois party in government, with a section of the bourgeoisie now voicing open support for it as reflected in the shift in editorial position of major bourgeois newspapers. In fact, it is hard to find any bourgeois press that is *not* pro-government right now, which makes it difficult for us to find out what is really going on behind all the propaganda. Whether such bourgeois support will survive what lies ahead in the negotiations with the imperialists over Greece's debt remains to be seen.

We cannot predict how long Syriza will manage to walk the tightrope between promising relief to the devastated masses and doing what the imperialists demand in order to stay in the EU. Nor can we predict whether the imperialists will actually allow Syriza some slack in order to ease up a bit on austerity or continue to hardline it—both voices are being heard from different quarters internationally. Some predict that D-Day will be sometime this week, and the British government is one among several governments and banks whose contingency planning for a Greek exit from the eurozone has been publicized. But it is hard to tell how much this is a propaganda exercise to

continued on page 4

Reuters

Syriza supporters at victory rally in Athens, January 25. Fake-socialist groups promote this bourgeois ruling party on the basis of its anti-austerity rhetoric.

NYC Pro-Syriza Forum

Reformists Hail Greek Ruling Party

The electoral victory of the left-sounding bourgeois Syriza party in Greece has some self-proclaimed socialist organizations in that country and their international affiliates on cloud nine. A celebratory confab, "After the Greek Elections: The Future of Austerity," was organized in New York City on February 6 by "State Department socialist" Joanne Landy's Campaign for Peace and Democracy. Panelists included Aaron Amaral of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose Greek comrades are part of the Left Platform inside Syriza; Alan Akrivos of Socialist Alternative/Committee for a Workers' International (SAlt/CWI), whose Greek affiliate unsuccessfully requested to run on Syriza's ticket in the elections; and Iannis Delatolas of the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), whose Greek cothinkers are part of the reformist Antarsya coalition, which tails after Syriza.

The panelists gushed that Syriza's election victory was a "historic moment" (Akrivos) and a "huge victory for the workers movement" (Delatolas), and they raved about how the formation of a new capitalist government is a step toward socialism. Far from it. Despite its rhetoric against the austerity imposed by the European Union (EU), Syriza does not represent the interests of the poor and working people but of the capitalist ruling class, whose affairs it now manages from the seat of government.

The reformists' enthusiasm for Syriza, an expression of outright class treachery, had not been dampened by its forming a government in coalition with the virulently chauvinist Independent Greeks (ANEL). Aside from one passing reference, the matter did not come up until the last panelist, the ISO's Amaral, spoke. In the "spirit of solidarity," he offered some "constructive" criticism of Syriza, including for its choice of coalition partner.

A Spartacist League comrade began his remarks in the discussion period, "And now for something completely different." Cutting against all the panelists' fawning, he argued:

> "I think there need to be some basic truths spoken here. The class character of Syriza is bourgeois. The class character of their coalition government, including with the right-wing, anti-immigrant ANEL group, is bourgeois. To call for a vote to Syriza, whether explicitly as the speaker from the ISO or the CWI did, or implicitly as Antarsya does, is a betrayal of the interests of the working class of Greece that further ties them to their capitalist class enemy. This is not a step forward, but an obstacle to winning workers to socialist revolution.
>
> "The Greek masses voted for Syriza in the hopes of getting some relief from EU austerity. They will be disappointed because this bourgeois government is beholden to the European, centrally German, imperialists and their banks. And it was the job of socialists to tell them that truth from day one. Syriza doesn't oppose the EU, it wants to stay in the EU, which is an imperialist conglomeration. It merely wants to renegotiate the terms of oppression."

The Spartacist speaker continued:

> "Our comrades in Greece, the Trotskyist Group of Greece, said: No vote to Syriza, no vote to Antarsya, down with the imperialist EU, and underlined that the only way forward lies in class struggle and the fight for international socialist revolution and a Socialist United States of Europe.
>
> "In that light, we did give critical support to the KKE (the Communist Party of Greece) not least because in this election they drew a crude class line and said they opposed the EU, wanted Greece out of the EU—and actually tried to win people over to that perspective—and said no vote to Syriza."

In Greece, our TGG comrades' critical support to the KKE was in sharp counterposition to the likes of the panelists at the NYC event. It also gained us a hearing among some supporters of that mass reformist party, which has the allegiance of the most militant section of the Greek working class. While calling for a vote to the KKE, our comrades argued against its calls for "people's power," which disappear the fact that the working class uniquely has the social power to overthrow capitalism. We denounced the KKE's embrace of Greek nationalism, as shown by its defense of capitalist Greece's borders. We also excoriated the KKE leadership's failure to mobilize its working-class base to sweep the Golden Dawn fascists off the streets.

The British SWP, ISO and SAlt pseudo-Trotskyists on the panel directed their sharpest vitriol at the KKE. These organizations, which lined up behind the imperialists in the drive for capitalist counterrevolution against the Soviet Union, have a long history of anti-Communism, which they present as anti-Stalinism. They went into a frenzy over the KKE's principled refusal to consider entering a Syriza-led government, blaming the KKE for forcing Syriza to partner with ANEL. SAlt's Akrivos lambasted the KKE's "criminal, abstentionist, ultra-left position." The chair, Joanne Landy—a long-time promoter of "democratic" imperialism's counterrevolutionary designs—interrupted Akrivos to underline that the KKE has a "long, rotten sectarian history." The room broke into loud applause when Akrivos went on to describe the KKE's policy as "Stalinist lunacy."

The real lunacy is to celebrate a capitalist party running a capitalist government. The meeting on the "Future of Austerity" revealed, yet again, the political bankruptcy of the reformists, whose pandering to Syriza and whatever else is popular can only mislead any worker who listens. An essential task for Marxist revolutionaries is to prepare the working class so it can reject false friends and see who its true enemies are. ■

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Greece...

(continued from page 3)

scare the Greek government into submission, and how much the European imperialists actually might believe that the time has come for Greece to be kicked out of the EU and that the ensuing "contagion" will be minimal. The European Central Bank certainly yanked on the leash attached to the choke collar last week with its refusal to keep accepting Greek bonds as collateral, thereby forcing the insolvent Greek banks to borrow emergency funds at a much higher interest rate.

Imperialists United for Austerity

All the imperialists are united in demanding Greece continue its "structural reforms," which mean decimating the wages and conditions of the working class in order to increase capitalist profitability. Without some crumbs to throw at the workers and poor, Syriza will have a hard time doing its job of keeping Greek capitalism safe by containing class and social struggle. That's really what all their pleas to the imperialists for some "humanitarianism" amount to.

With no such crumbs in hand, Syriza has played up its nationalist populism domestically as an ideological prop for its capitalist government of "social salvation." Having fallen two seats short of a parliamentary majority, Syriza predictably proceeded to form a government coalition with the virulently anti-immigrant and nationalist Independent Greeks (ANEL), who are only a step removed from Golden Dawn on the Greek political spectrum.

This was the culmination of more than a year of repeated collaboration in parliament between Syriza and ANEL. Their collaboration began with a joint front over the 2013 economic crisis in Cyprus and included populist campaigns, for example in opposition to the proposed privatization of the public power company DEI. Among the concessions Syriza made to the bourgeoisie and the likes of ANEL before the election was to renounce its opposition to NATO, make overtures to the reactionary Orthodox church, come out against adoption by gay parents and assure the fascist-infested police that they would get more resources if Syriza were elected. Even a notorious pro-Golden Dawn Orthodox archbishop has now come out in support of Syriza.

The government coalition between the bourgeois populists of the left and right is thus united not only in its "anti-austerity" rhetoric but in its upholding of reactionary bourgeois nationalism. Indeed, Syriza handed ANEL leader Panos Kammenos the post of defense minister. He then promptly proceeded to fly to the disputed islets of Imia, off the coast of Turkey, on the anniversary of the fatal crash of a Greek Navy helicopter there in 1996. This is an anniversary regularly celebrated by the fascists. More importantly, Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras' first foreign trip as prime minister was *not* to a West European capital to deal with Greece's economic crisis but to Cyprus, where he complained about Turkish "provocations" off the southern coast of the island. While there, he would not give a straight answer to a question about whether minorities in Thrace should be given more rights.

Syriza is so far from being any kind of "radical" left party that prior to the election, Marine Le Pen of France's National Front said she would welcome a Syriza victory as strengthening "eurosceptic" forces. And after the election, Golden Dawn announced that it will support measures by Syriza against privatizations as well as anything Syriza does to oppose sanctions against Russia. In their own way, such expressions of support by fascists to Syriza confirm how correct we were to characterize its class character as bourgeois.

AFP

Athens, April 2014: People receiving food handouts. European Union-imposed economic austerity has devastated working people, unemployed.

Subordination to Imperialism

While Syriza's posturing over ending austerity and verbal challenges to the Troika may have caused tremors in the markets and grabbed headlines, it is clear that at bottom Syriza seeks to collaborate with the imperialists to keep Greece in the EU. Syriza's *modus operandi* so far seems to be to trumpet some tough-sounding position and then water it down in practice over the following days. For example, its promise to overturn privatizations actually boils down to reviewing the plans for new privatizations while quietly pledging not to touch [Chinese shipping company] Cosco's privatized part of the port in Piraeus. Syriza gave "Left Platform" leader Panagiotis Lafazanis the ministry in charge of privatizations, and he has gone from calling the proposed privatization of the Greek natural gas company a "national crime" to admitting that its partial privatization is proceeding.

Likewise many of Syriza's promises have melted away, such as immediately restoring the minimum wage level. However, its promises to provide free health care for the poorest and other measures of social welfare, along with the pledge to increase the minimum wage and pensions by 2016, were enthusiastically received here and are undoubtedly a big source of illusions in the government.

More than 20 billion euros have poured out of Greek banks since November, leaving them insolvent without the European Central Bank's promise to continue to "infuse liquidity." More money flowed out of Greek banks in the week before this year's election than in May 2012, when the imperialists worried about a Greek banking collapse. That no capital controls have been implemented in the face of a veritable bank run is an expression of the Greek government's expectation of continued financial support from the imperialists.

Apparently, the possible dissolution of the Troika has been discussed for some months now as a measure that would give more "democratic legitimacy" to European institutions. It would certainly be a way to throw Syriza a symbolic bone while making not one bit of difference in Greece's subordination to the imperialists in practice. The likes of U.S. president Barack Obama, French president François Hollande and Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi have made comments about how austerity alone isn't going to get Europe out of its crisis and about the need to negotiate a new deal with Greece, comments that have been played up here as expressions of support for Syriza. Of course, the U.S. "growth strategy" was to bail out the banks—which then threw hundreds of thousands out of their homes—as well as bailing out the auto bosses who slashed wages and conditions with the collusion of the union bureaucracy. But such attacks on the workers and poor go unmentioned in the bourgeois press here while Syriza whips up hopes that Obama and others will pressure Germany to give the Greeks a break.

Measures like hiring back sacked Finance Ministry cleaning ladies and removing busloads of riot cops from downtown Athens have cost the Syriza government almost nothing while doing a lot to bolster its image as friends of the downtrodden. At the same time, the Syriza government continues to send out its cops against immigrants, as described in the *New York Times* (7 February) article, "Greek Austerity Spawns Fakery: Playing Nurse," which also gives a sense of the grim state of Greek public health care. These mostly immigrant "illegal" nurses are being targeted both by the fascists and the state. The alliance with ANEL will certainly help Syriza in that it can claim its hands are tied over passing socially progressive legislation on questions such as immigration or gay rights. Already, ANEL has announced that it will vote against pending legislation to give Greek citizenship to the children of immigrants who are born and raised here.

Our political opposition to this capitalist government is not dependent on whether its policies are more or less progressive. That is the criteria of much of the reformist left, who hope that with enough pressure from below Syriza might become a "workers government" somewhere between capitalism and socialism, which would supposedly pave the way to full-blown socialism. Even if Greece were to end up outside the EU in the near future against Syriza's wishes, the only way back to "growth" under capitalism is the continued exploitation and oppression of the working people of Greece. This is what the reformists inside Syriza conceal. But so does the ostensibly oppositional Antarsya coalition, which is continuing its alliance with ex-Syriza leader Alekos Alavanos and his nationalist Plan B group, who are explicitly for a capitalist Greece outside the EU. The KKE excepted, most of the left has celebrated Syriza's victory to one degree or another.

The Antarsya coalition announced that with the Syriza victory Greece has turned a page and promises much struggle to "fight so that measures in the interests of the people are imposed, so that the memoranda [austerity terms] are negated, so that the struggles are linked with the program of the anti-capitalist overthrow in the context of a left, labor and popular opposition." In other words, they will struggle to push Syriza to the left. And as true believers in the possibility of genuine democracy under capitalism, they also pledge to fight in a front to root out Golden Dawn support in the police and the state.

What such a front means was on display at the first demonstration under the Syriza government. The fascists held their yearly anti-Turkey rally on January 31 to honor the three Greeks killed in the helicopter crash on the Imia islets—a rally attended by fascists from Germany, Spain and Italy as well. The left typically holds a counter-rally. This year the left rallied two hours before the fascists, in a different location and with no intention of stopping the Golden Dawn rally. Everyone from the Syriza youth to Antarsya and anarchists were represented. Much was made of the fact that there was a minimal police presence and the cops stood by as protesters sprayed graffiti on police buses. Had this demonstration been intended as a mobilization to stop the fascists, you can be sure that hundreds of armed riot cops would have been dispatched to protect the Golden Dawn rally. ■

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Oil Workers...

(continued from page 1)

a move by the union tops that has not sat well with those on the picket lines.

Meanwhile, management and other scabs have kept struck facilities running. In this heavily automated, capital-intensive industry, only a relatively small number of scabs are needed for this strikebreaking activity. As one striker at the Tesoro refinery in Carson, California, told *Workers Vanguard*, the scabs, who lack sufficient training, are "sitting on a ticking time bomb." The bosses have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to risk a refinery disaster, this time in order to inflict a defeat on the union.

The USW tops, who have acceded to small picket lines restricted to select entrances, seem to want striking workers to wait it out until equipment breaks down or the plants otherwise become inoperable. This strategy is a loser. It avoids hitting the bosses in the pocketbook, where it truly hurts, and drags out the strike. In the last national oil strike, in 1980, the OCAW union tops put up similarly symbolic picket lines (even while striking all unionized refineries); scabs operated the facilities for three months before a settlement was reached.

Further undermining the current strike, building trades workers are overwhelmingly crossing the picket lines to perform maintenance and other jobs. During normal operations, many plants have a mix of union and non-union contract workers in addition to the USW workforce. Reports have emerged of bad blood between the USW and the craft unions, including mutual recriminations over job-stealing claims. Wherever the truth lies in these jurisdictional disputes, there is no excuse for scabbing. If the oil giants are able to have their way with the USW, the craft unions will find themselves in a weaker position when the bosses turn their sights on them. A common front of the USW and the craft unions in struggle against the oil companies would be to the advantage of all refinery workers.

To win decisively, this strike must be extended and all refineries shut down tight with mass picket lines, at every entrance, that no one dares cross. The guiding principle should be one out, all out. In the course of this battle, it is incumbent upon the USW to reach out to the non-union contract workers—who are temporarily hired to maintain plant equipment, then discarded—by striving to bring them into the union with full wages and benefits. A militant strike could also chart a way forward for organizing the non-union refineries and more widely in the oil industry.

Anti-Union Laws and the Capitalist State

Mass pickets would almost certainly be met with government injunctions. Indeed, in most places there are already laws limiting the size and location of picket lines so that scabs have an easy time of it. Unions that honor the picket lines are threatened with fines under the Taft-Hartley Act, which bans secondary boycotts and sympathy strikes. After a week of not crossing the USW pickets at the Marathon refinery in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, building trades workers were instructed by their union tops to scab in order to avoid "detrimental legal proceedings." The bosses prohibit such union solidarity in action precisely because it is one of labor's most effective weapons.

A striker at the BP refinery in Whiting opined to a *WV* reporter that there hasn't been a pro-labor law in the past 30 years. In fact, the capitalist government's "labor law" is designed to hold the unions captive to the class enemy. And the forces of the capitalist state, including the courts and cops, are there to be deployed against striking workers to enforce those laws. Criminally, the USW bureaucracy has welcomed into the union the bosses' scab-herding security guards, who are cop auxiliaries.

To counter the bosses and their anti-labor arsenal, the unions must make use of their own weapons: their numbers, organization and collective strength. In the early 1980s, a spate of killings of strikers, among them OCAW member Gregury Goobic, who was run over by a scab driving a truck through a picket line at a California refinery, made clear the burning need to build solid mass picket lines. As we observed in "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win" (*WV* No. 349, 2 March 1984):

> "'But that's illegal,' the bureaucrats whine. So maybe some labor leaders go to jail six months *after* they surround the terminals with thousands of pickets and call a solidarity strike and the battle is won....
>
> "No decisive gain of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in plant occupations. What counts is power."

Picket lines are the battle lines of the class war, where strikes are won or lost based on the balance of forces between the workers and their exploiters.

The USW bureaucrats, like the rest of the AFL-CIO officialdom, hide behind the anti-labor laws as an excuse to avoid sharp class struggle. At the refinery in Martinez, California, picketers who tried to prevent tanker trucks from crossing the lines were told by their own picket captains to stop. With the USW tops playing by the bosses' rules, it is no wonder that even workers who reminisce about the militant tactics of past labor struggles see little prospect of reviving those traditions. If the unions are to be revitalized, a new class-struggle leadership, imbued with the understanding that the interests of labor and capital are irreconcilably counterposed, must be forged.

AFP

Texas City, March 2005: Debris from massive BP refinery explosion that killed 15 workers and injured over 170.

Oakland Tribune

Gregory Goobic, labor martyr, killed by scab driver during 1984 strike at Bay Area refinery.

The weakened state of labor today does not foreclose the possibility of mounting a real fight in this strike. The USW itself has a total of 850,000 members, not just in steel and refining but other key industries like mining and rubber. Many workers who bring oil and gas to and from the refineries are also in unions, from Teamster truckers and rail engineers to tugboat operators in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). If the full force of the USW was mobilized, and support garnered from these strategic unions, the strike would be vastly more effective, making the bosses think twice about trying to enforce any injunctions.

There have been isolated incidents pointing to the potential for labor solidarity. Members of other unions, including nurses, teachers and auto workers, have joined the picket lines. In Whiting, USW members from nearby steel plants have marched with the pickets. These mostly black steelworkers were warmly welcomed by the largely white refinery workers. One steelworker, from U.S. Steel in Gary, Indiana, told *WV* that he came out to show solidarity in the expectation that it would be reciprocated when the steel contract expires in August. Notably, Teamsters and Ironworkers are not crossing the Whiting picket lines.

In the 1980 oil strike, there was a significant, though brief, show of labor solidarity when the ILWU shut down the Los Angeles port for one day in support of the striking refinery workers (see *WV* No. 251, 7 March 1980). Today, the longshore workers in the ILWU (and the International Longshoremen's Association on the East and Gulf Coast) remain key potential allies of the refinery strikers. The ILWU has been working without a contract since July and the shipping bosses have recently imposed a partial lockout (see page 12). A victory by one or both of these powerful unions would redound to the benefit of the entire working class.

A number of capitalist Democratic Party politicians, and even a few Republicans, have expressed support for the strike, with the USW bureaucracy touting a visit by one Democrat, Congressman Gene Green, to a Texas picket line. Striking workers must be clear: bourgeois politicians are no "friends of labor." In the event the union actually flexes some muscle, they will undoubtedly scatter to the winds. And Democratic president Barack Obama is no better. When 400 Philadelphia transit workers went on strike last June, he ordered them back to work.

The pro-capitalist union officials' embrace of the Democrats is part and parcel of the lie that there is a partnership between labor and the filthy rich capitalists who run the country. USW International president Leo Gerard, who expresses a special affinity for the current administration, has been tapped repeatedly to sit on White House bodies. In 2010, Gerard was appointed by Obama to his Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations along with various business magnates, including the then-CEO of U.S. Steel. That committee advocates for the economic interests of U.S. imperialism in dominating dependent countries and competing with its rivals overseas, at the expense of working people everywhere.

Openly boasting of his exploits in filing trade complaints against foreign corporations and countries, Gerard is a strong pusher of protectionist poison under the pretext of helping "preserve and grow jobs" in steel and other industries. In fact, this practice gives aid to the profiteering of the U.S. capitalists, while making enemies of workers abroad rather than of the greedy American bosses who exploit USW members. The capitalists always seek to maximize their profits and drive down labor costs (that is, slash wages and worsen work conditions), including by moving production wherever it suits them. During the 1980s and early '90s, OCAW lost nearly half its membership, largely because U.S. oil companies moved refinery production offshore. With the shale oil boom, domestic refineries have expanded their operations of late.

The protectionism of the USW leadership has given a boost to Big Oil, not least with a 5,000-page suit the union prepared to curtail China's burgeoning green energy sector. That suit was taken up by the Obama administration with the World Trade Organization. Gerard is notorious for his virulent bashing of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism has been overthrown. In so doing, he eggs on the U.S. imperialists in their counterrevolutionary crusade to reopen that country to untrammeled capitalist exploitation. If successful, Washington's moves against China would embolden the imperialists in further putting the squeeze on working people around the globe. Just as class-conscious workers defend the USW and other unions against the bosses despite their sellout leaders, workers must defend China against imperialist-backed capitalist counterrevolution despite the misrule of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy.

For New Leadership of the Working Class

Some striking refinery workers hark back to the late OCAW International secretary-treasurer Tony Mazzocchi. In the 1990s, Mazzocchi and other OCAW officials were involved with the Labor Party Advocates (LPA). This lash-up of left-talking union bureaucrats eventually founded their so-called Labor Party in 1996 after years of discussions. However, the LPA, far from a genuine workers party, was never intended to be anything other than a shill for the Democrats and soon faded away. Its aim was to rope workers back into the Democratic Party fold at a time of growing disaffection with both the Republicans and Democrats. Its newsletter *Labor Party Advocate* (August 1991) explicitly stated: "Organizing Labor Party Advocates is not going to retard the re-birth of the Democrats. On the contrary, it will encourage it." The working class needs its own party, one standing completely independent from the capitalists and their political representatives.

The chronic fatigue and overwork of USW members is all too familiar to workers across the country. While many people are compelled to work excessive hours just to make ends meet, millions more are unemployed. Over a century ago, massive class battles won the eight-hour workday, a historic gain for labor now substantially eroded. Workers today need to fight for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, linking the fight for decent working conditions to the struggle for jobs for all. A 30-hour workweek at 40 hours' pay, with the available work divided among everyone, would go a long way toward addressing both unemployment and the serious safety problems resulting from fatigue and understaffing.

The capitalists will, of course, reply that such demands are not practical (at least not if they are to maintain their obscene wealth). Indeed, the felt needs of the working class run right up against the inability of the capitalist system to satisfy them. What we must strive for is a wholly different type of society, a workers America where the productive wealth has been ripped out of the hands of the tiny capitalist elite and put at the disposal of the vast majority. Such a society can be achieved only when the working class, led by a genuine workers party, overthrows capitalist class rule through a socialist revolution and establishes a workers government. ■

The Rise of British Imperialism

Part One

The Protestant Reformation to the English Revolution

One hundred years ago, World War I, which brought unprecedented suffering and mass slaughter to working people, demonstrated that capitalism had reached its final, barbarous epoch, the epoch of imperialism. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), "Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established" and "in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed." A small club of wealthy imperialist powers, currently dominated by the U.S., subordinates and oppresses the vast majority of the world's population. Today, most of Asia, Africa and Latin America, "politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence."

As a world economic system, imperialism took shape in the late 1800s. However, to understand how and why imperialism emerged out of the political and economic logic of capitalism requires going back to the origins of the world capitalist system in the 16th century, some three centuries earlier. This subject was addressed in a presentation by comrade Russell Stoker at the Trotskyist League of Canada/Ligue Trotskyste du Canada Thirteenth National Conference in summer 2013, an edited version of which was printed as a two-part article in *Spartacist Canada* Nos. 182 and 183 (Fall 2014 and Winter 2014/2015). We reprint below the first part of the article.

* * *

SPARTACIST CANADA

This class is about the rise of British imperialism, the first of that economic order to arise. Arguably it was also the first to decline. Because Britain was the first, it represents the "classical" rise of imperialism, which developed quite differently elsewhere. For instance, in America, which had capitalism in its bones, there was no previous epoch of feudalism to overcome; a relatively small indigenous population was easily overwhelmed and militarily crushed by the settlers' regime. Capitalism developed quite differently too in Germany, France and Japan especially, but that is well beyond the scope of this talk.

Originally I had considered presenting the elements of the structure, the relentless and bloody march of British capital across the globe, etc. But in the end, comrades asked why Britain was first and not Spain or India—and that was a brilliant question.

To attempt to answer that, I have to take us on a bit of a selective romp through the ages, well before the onset of British imperialism. Now I will not be discussing the Scramble for Africa, the Opium Wars, the Near East, China, the French Revolution or even the Napoleonic Wars, which are not at all unrelated to the rise of imperialism and more specifically the rise of British imperialism. In particular I regret giving France such short shrift, but there you go. This is a one-hour climb and I am sure to shift my ladder on many sets of PhD toes—apologies in advance.

The Feudal Order

> "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.
>
> "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."

So begins the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1847.

What did this class struggle look like in feudal Europe? The early medieval Catholic church, in the absence of printing presses and a literate populace, possessed a virtual monopoly of technical and literary knowledge. The church became the ideological and political power which transcended the local authority of the lords and chieftains, great and small.

As the church vigorously expanded and consolidated its empire and wealth, in alliance with the rising nobility, it came to mirror that nobility in aristocratic structure, ostentatious wealth, corruption and a capricious cruelty toward its subjects. Monarchs were given the authority of church and God when they were crowned by some high clergyman or other.

And the church was far and away the largest feudal landlord, owning up to a third of the land. That included the sovereign papal states. Moreover, many of the clergy were feudal lords in their own right. Later, as trade revived and the new town merchants grew rich from that trade, the landed nobility in the countryside allied with the church to rob the peasantry of their common land and find the means to extort the growing wealth of the merchants. In particular they made use of revenue-generating "indulgences"—the forgiveness of sins for cash—essentially as a form of extortion by threat of eternal damnation.

It became increasingly intolerable for the rising new classes—artisans, merchants, peasant smallholders—to bear the weight and insult of this idle and parasitic class. That impelled the revolt known as the Protestant Reformation. You can read about the German Peasant War, the first key confrontation which culminated in 1525, and its outstanding leader, the radical preacher Thomas Müntzer, in *The Peasant War in Germany* by Friedrich Engels, which I can't get into here. Suffice it to say that the bloody end result of the first serious attempt at a bourgeois revolution was a victory for the other side—the old ruling class.

The fractious German nobility was then able to retrench itself in a constellation of decentralized and highly autocratic princely states, which retarded the political and industrial development of Germany.

Bettmann

Jews being burned at the stake under Spanish Inquisition for refusing to convert, around 1492. Catholic church was at center of feudal reaction.

Meanwhile, Charles V used a monstrous pile of cash from a family of German loansharks—the Fuggers—to get himself christened Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. Charles was the guy who really set to robbing the Americas and got the fires of the counterreformation cooking. I want to highlight the economic and political degeneration of the Spanish towns and cities under Charles V, as opposed to the situation of the towns in England and Holland which were flourishing. This is relevant to why Britain—not Spain, which was far richer—was first to industrialize.

The Spanish towns had been previously compacted by the Moorish incursions, becoming centres of advanced manufacture and economic activity. That period ended with the completion of the *Reconquista*, a period spanning some 700 years and ending in 1492—the year Columbus sailed the ocean blue. That also marked the year of the Alhambra Decree by which the Spanish Inquisition forced the Sephardic Jews into hiding or exile from Spain and, later, Portugal. Most went to the more tolerant Ottoman Empire, but some made their way to Brazil where they later played a role in the spread of sugar production to the West Indies. Others, like the philosopher Baruch Spinoza's folks, went north to Protestant Amsterdam.

The Spanish *Reconquista*, a piecemeal "liberation" from the North Africans, established a sort of realm where Catalonia, Castile, Aragon and such were all semi-independent kingdoms. From there, the kings of Spain dealt with councils, alliances through marriage, negotiations and all of that. Then along comes Emperor Charles V. He was having none of it. He well and truly smashed the independent power of the nobility and laid into the merchants with heavy new taxes to pay back the Fuggers and especially to finance his wars across Europe.

When the nascent bourgeoisie of the Spanish towns, bleeding from the pocketbook, rose up in revolt in the early 1520s, they were crushed. The local town councils were destroyed, and henceforth Spain suffered under an absolute monarch and was thoroughly drained of capital. The urban areas of Spain disintegrated as economic and political entities. The nobility lost its power, but retained privileges totally dependent upon their support to the King. Then, inheriting a Spain which had been bankrupted by his father's military ventures, Philip II proved to be very much his father's son. He carried on absolutely, as it were. It's from him that the Philippines, a Spanish colony for more than three centuries, got its name.

The Reformation in Scotland

Unlike the furious retrenchment of the German nobility or the feudal impoverishment of Spain, the Reformation unravelled feudal relations in England and Scotland, culminating in the English Civil War of 1642-51, which Engels pointedly called the second great bourgeois upheaval. Thomas Müntzer was dead and Martin Luther's half-hearted measures could not quench the human bonfires set by the Inquisition in Spain or Bloody Mary in England. The Reformers required a harder leader and doctrine, and that they found in John Calvin. In doctrine, the Calvinists loathed all tyranny, all dishonesty, pretty much all moral wrongs of every sort so far as they could determine them. As Engels noted in his 1892 introduction to *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, "Calvin's church constitution was thoroughly democratic and republican; and where the kingdom of God was republicanised, could the kingdoms of this world remain subject to monarchs, bishops and lords?"

Samuel Cooper

Hulton

Left: Oliver Cromwell, leader of English bourgeois revolution. Right: Beheading of Charles I in 1649. Regicide marked overthrow of feudal order in England.

The man who more than any other carried forward Calvin's war on the corrupt feudal church, and who now moves to the centre of this story, is the totally fearsome figure of John Knox. Knox made it his personal holy mission to turn Scotland into the New Jerusalem. He believed political power was ordained by God but that the power was vested in the people, not in kings and especially not in the Catholic clergy. "Punishing idolatry and destroying tyranny" was a sacred duty God had placed on "the whole body of the people... and of every man in his vocation."

That meant invading Catholic churches, smashing the religious artwork and driving off the papal clergy who rightly feared for their lives. Knox fiercely despised the political authority of the monarchy. He dismissed the divine right of succession and fervently preached that any monarch ruled by the consent of the people—all tyranny must be destroyed. In 1563 he famously brought Mary, Queen of Scots to tears when he told her as much to her face.

The Calvinists' emphasis on reading the Bible was a great stimulus to literacy in Scotland. Their primary motivation was putting the common man in touch with the word of God, not seeding the ground for future scientific and engineering breakthroughs. Nevertheless, it is a notable fact that by the time of the Act of Union in 1707, most parishes in Scotland had a school paid for by the Reformed Church of Scotland, and those schools were open to both boys and girls regardless of social status. Scotland, with less than one-

quarter of the population of England and Wales, boasted five merit-based universities as opposed to England's two upper-class institutions. Mind you, the Scottish Highlands remained economically more backward, less literate and more Catholic.

The Reformation in England

The ascension in 1485 of a new lineage in the English monarchy—the Tudor kings who were the victors in the Wars of the Roses—had effectively obliterated the old nobility. Henry VIII, the second Tudor king, broke from Rome and went on to expropriate and redistribute much Catholic property and wealth with the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Those nobles who profited from his favour became a sort of *nouveau riche*, much more closely aligned with mercantile enrichment than feudal land wealth.

The new nobles then proceeded to strip the land of people in favour of more profitable usage. Karl Marx put it this way in Volume One of *Capital*:

> "The great feudal lords created an incomparably larger proletariat by the forcible driving of the peasantry from the land, to which the latter had the same feudal right as the lord himself, and by the usurpation of the common lands. The rapid rise of the Flemish wool manufactures, and the corresponding rise in the price of wool in England, gave the direct impulse to these evictions. The old nobility had been devoured by the great feudal wars. The new nobility was the child of its time, for which money was the power of all powers. Transformation of arable land into sheep-walks was, therefore, its cry."

Engels succinctly captured the process in an 1881 letter to Marx's daughter, Jenny Longuet:

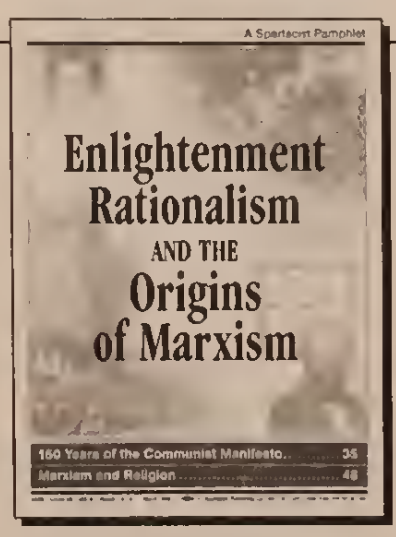
> "The whole Protestant reformation,... apart from its dogmatical squabbles and quibbles, was a vast plan for a confiscation of land. First the land was taken from the Church. Then the Catholics, in countries where Protestantism was in power, were declared rebels and their land confiscated."

As Protestants like to say, "God helps those who help themselves."

The whole process had been preconditioned by earlier population losses from the Black Death in the mid 1300s. That produced a high demand for labour. Naturally, the much smaller surviving population of peasants worked only the best and most productive land. Combined with an extended period of excellent weather, this likely resulted in bumper crops followed by a slump in grain prices and a corresponding higher cost of city manufactures. Feudal relations would become less and less remunerative to the lords and nobles.

That "Most Catholic" King Philip II, the absolute monarch of Spain, and his gigantic bureaucracy fought tooth and nail to retain the feudal Catholic political economic order. He waged wars against England, France and the Netherlands, wars which effectively and repeatedly emptied the royal coffers. The ill-fated "Spanish Armada" of 1588 was but one episode.

The armada was mostly savaged by a storm, a defeat celebrated in England with a commemorative medal embossed with the words *Flavit Jehovah et Dissipati Sunt*—Jehovah blew, and they were



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David Wilkie

Painting of Scottish Calvinist reformer John Knox preaching against feudal tyranny.

scattered. The very next year a similar armada was sent by the English Queen Elizabeth against the Spanish. It met a similar fate—being scattered and sunk in a huge gale—but they didn't sing any songs or strike any medals about that one.

As with the Spanish crown, the wars depleted the wealth of the English queen. She depended financially upon the booty collected by her sea pirates like Francis Drake and also the granting of various monopolies like that of her land pirates of the East India Company.

On the continent, Philip II revived the Inquisition as an ideological terror weapon against the Reformation. If one considers the enormous parasitic bureaucracy of Spain, the vast military expenditures, including the escalating costs of extracting gold and silver from the New World (harried as they were by Drake and company), and the retrograde effort to constrain mercantile trade, etc., it is little wonder the Spanish empire eventually collapsed.

Comrade George Foster of the Spartacist League/U.S. mentioned another interesting factor which worked in both directions, bleeding feudal Spain and enriching the new merchant class. He pointed out that because Spain lacked manufacturing capacity, much of the gold and silver which that empire looted from the New World made its way into the hands of the great manufacturing and banking centres elsewhere. The Spanish people and towns were in fact quite poor. At any rate, whatever successes favoured Rome and Spain in defense of the feudal order were insufficient to stem the tide of history.

The English Civil War

Since the Norman Conquest of 1066, there had been a parliament or council of some sort in England ostensibly representing the "people" to the crown. Regardless of how much the parliament of the 1640s considered itself the representative of the people, it was, as Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky noted, "based on the most whimsical franchise" ("Where Is Britain Going?" [1925]). The king dissolved and recalled that body as ever he saw fit. Mostly he saw fit to recall it in order to provide funds for his military ventures. Those were not often, if ever, in the best interests of the city merchants who filled the Lower House, which Trotsky wryly notes was found to be three times as wealthy as the House of Lords.

In Scotland, the Calvinists were pressing for independence after a successful revolt in 1637 against taxation and insufferable religious interference by the government of Charles I. Charles recalled the English Parliament and put the squeeze on it to fund yet another foray against the Scots. Parliament resisted. The Royalist forces, short on cash, went ahead regardless. They got themselves badly spanked, and the Scottish army invaded in defense of Parliament—an intervention which accelerated the outbreak of the bourgeois revolution in England.

The English bourgeoisie then set about creating an army of its own in defense of its representative body, the Parliament. It was a bold and insubordinate act, one which posed a revolutionary insurrection against the monarchy. And there's the rub: as the bourgeoisie gained greater economic power, it became both necessary and possible to fashion a state apparatus better suited to its needs. The New Model Army, created by Parliament in 1645, concentrated in its ranks the most courageous and resolute elements. Very soon those elements far exceeded the determination of the bourgeois parliamentary representatives themselves. To the head of that Puritan army rose one Oliver Cromwell, the great Calvinist leader, a commoner who called to himself like-minded warriors to lead the revolution.

Cromwell's task was to destroy the tyranny, the tyrant's court nobility and the tyrant's natural ally, the High Church, which had maintained a hierarchical form of church governance not much removed from the Catholic Holy See. That task required mobilizing the masses and building the New Model Army with professional soldiers representing the interests of the Parliament, as opposed to the personal interests of one or another lord or baron as had been the medieval practice. Those soldiers were "Roundheads," that is, lacking the curly big hair wigs of the gentry. The revolutionary army pretty much pounded the gentry's mercenaries wherever they met.

Hulton

Oliver Cromwell confronting Parliament in 1653, during short-lived English republic after execution of Charles I.

Charles I then hied-thee-hither off to Scotland of all places, where he promised heaven on earth, and somewhat surprisingly the dim leaders of the Scots said, "well, alright then," shifted sides, marched off with Charles to mix it up with the New Model Army and basically got what they deserved.

In the fall of 1649, when Cromwell invaded Ireland, Royalist forces from outside were also converging there. The thing is, Cromwell's campaign in Ireland was not only carried out to defeat the Royalists. It wasn't simply an extension of the English Civil War on Irish terrain. From the time of the 1641 uprising in Ireland—before the Civil War—both Royalists and Parliament agreed that Ireland must be subordinated to England. The only question was which side would command the English army that would carry this out. As an added incentive for a military conquest, Parliament had passed an "Adventurers Act" in 1642 inviting English moneymen to "invest" in the army, in return for which they were guaranteed Irish land. Under this scheme Cromwell himself put in over £2,000 and had been promised land in Leinster.

Cromwell's military campaign in Ireland was designed to colonize Ireland with settlers by seizing land from Catholic landowners, who were sent to Connaught. Along the way, he expropriated some 2.5 million Irish acres. Tenants were offered the choice of going with the landlord, or remaining to serve the new lord as "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Cromwell also instituted severe repression for the earlier uprising; he shipped off a whole mess of the unrepentant Irish rebels to the West Indies as indentured servants.

Marxist historian Christopher Hill describes Cromwell's conquest of Ireland as "the first big triumph of English imperialism and the first big defeat of English democracy" (*The English Revolution of 1640*). He's echoing Karl Marx who wrote in 1869 that "English reaction in England (as in Cromwell's time) had its roots in the subjugation of Ireland" (Letter to Engels, 10 December 1869). Cromwell's army conquered Ireland, crushed the resistance and seized two-thirds of the land. In addition, Cromwell encouraged colonial settlement of Ireland, particularly from among the most radical regiments in his army, as a way of dispersing troublemakers.

So, to recap, under Cromwell's leadership the revolution conquered England, smashed a recalcitrant Scotland and defeated rebellious Ireland. The British Isles were thus unified through force of arms under the newly confident bourgeois class. Trotsky relates:

> "The British social crisis of the seventeenth century combined in itself features of the German Reformation of the sixteenth century with features of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century. "In Cromwell Luther joins hands with Robespierre."
>
> —"Where Is Britain Going?"

Parenthetically, it is under Cromwell that the navy becomes a permanent force. Once Charles I famously lost his temper along with his head, Cromwell sagely reasoned that the monarchs of Europe would be right pissed. And so in 1651, directly challenging the Dutch command of maritime trade, Cromwell imposed duties on imported goods. His Navigation Act—essentially a declaration of war—forbade Dutch merchant shipping to English ports or colonies and harried them in "English" waters like the North Sea, the English Channel and so on.

Cromwell rapidly built and manned large naval warships to defend the Commonwealth. They also protected convoys to the English colonies and successfully recaptured Royalist strongholds in the nearby islands, the West Indies and America. The most powerful merchant fleet by far belonged to the Dutch, larger and richer than all the other European merchant fleets combined. During the 17th century Holland had the most advanced capitalist economy in the world. If you wanted in

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SYC Defends Marxism at Finkelstein Talk

City College of New York

Down With Zionist Terror Against Palestinians!

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

This last December, anti-Zionist historian Norman Finkelstein spoke at the City College of New York (CCNY) to kick off a "Palestine Awareness Week" organized by the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). This came at the end of a semester that had opened with protests against a bloody bombing campaign and invasion of the Gaza strip by the Israeli army, which killed over 2,000 Palestinians.

Though mostly unspoken, there was palpable tension between the speaker and his hosts. Much of the crowd at the event stood for a "one-state solution"—that is to say, Israelis and Palestinians living in a single bourgeois-democratic state, supposedly with rights for all. Finkelstein argues that pro-Palestinians must stand for two separate states based on the 1967 borders.

The New York Spartacus Youth Club attended Finkelstein's talk to present our revolutionary Marxist program for the Near East. We recognize that both the one- and two-state "solutions" of the SJP and Finkelstein are in fact impossible. The "two states" that Finkelstein proposes would deny the Palestinian people the right to at least a large chunk of their historic homeland, while "one state" as envisioned hy its supporters would necessarily be governed by the Palestinian majority, thus denying the right to self-determination of Israeli Jews, who constitute a nation. In fact, what exists now is the sort of "one state" foreseeable under capitalism—one ruled by the Zionists with the Palestinians confined to increasingly smaller occupied areas whose fate is entirely in the hands of the Israeli military.

As one of our comrades said during the discussion: "Only through the establishment of a *socialist federation of the Near East* can the national claims of the Palestinians, as well as the myriad other oppressed peoples of the region, be equitably resolved. The peoples of the Near East will never know justice, peace or prosperity until a series of working-class revolutions overthrow bourgeois rule throughout the region. For this we need revolutionary workers parties in countries throughout the region linked to internationalist class struggle against capitalist rule. This is the only realistic solution."

Despite the fact that Finkelstein and "one state" supporters engage in sometimes-heated arguments, their politics share key premises. Both place their faith in the capitalist rulers of the U.S., Europe and the Near East. Seeking answers within the framework of capitalist rule, neither have an answer to alleviate the truly desperate economic conditions in Gaza and the West Bank.

In fact, many in the SJP—including leading members of the Maoist Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC)—promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. BDS is organized to pressure various capitalist institutions, such as universities, local governments, corporations and the "international community," to force Israel to act on behalf of the Palestinians. In particular, the BDS movement appeals to the United Nations and "international law," which they, no less than Finkelstein, portray as the court of last appeal for the Palestinian masses.

Though Finkelstein has fallen out of favor among some activists for calling BDS a "cult" that seeks to "destroy Israel," he was nonetheless sponsored for his long history of exposing Israeli atrocities and those who apologize for them. He has been targeted for persecution by Zionists because he is a Jewish historian, the son of Holocaust survivors, who defends Palestinian rights. His refusal to back down in the face of accusations of support to terrorism, censorship campaigns, and drives to have him fired have earned Finkelstein the respect of many activists. Over the years, we have defended Finkelstein and other academics that have come under attack for their anti-Zionist politics (see "Protest DePaul University Attack on Norman Finkelstein!" *WV* No. 895, 6 July 2007). The witchhunts against Finkelstein and others, duplicitously equating opposition to Zionism with anti-Jewish bigotry, have been conducted by a well-funded, well-oiled machine, supported on various levels from university administrations to state governments. These reactionary attacks are of the same mold as the recent campaigns against BDS supporters and SJP groups (see "'Boycott Israel' Campaign and Illusions in Democratic Imperialism," *WV* No. 1045, 2 May 2014).

Reuters

Gaza, November 2012: Palestinians gather around site of house destroyed in Israeli air strike.

Marxism vs. Bourgeois Pressure Politics

Finkelstein's talk included a highly compressed history of Zionism from the late 19th century to the present. To his credit he included the fact that many European Jews were opposed to the Zionist project, choosing instead to fight for the liberation of the Jews as part of the fight for socialism and the liberation of all humanity. The talk challenged the Zionist myth that Palestine before 1948 was a land without a people and also denounced how Zionists have used the horror of the Holocaust to justify the theft of Palestinian land and all manner of their own crimes enacted against the Palestinian people. However, when it came to proposing a way forward to end the misery of the Palestinians and address the myriad forms of national and ethnic oppression that plague the region, Finkelstein had nothing to offer except demoralization. He directed the assembled students to throw themselves at the feet of the bourgeoisies of the world in the form of the UN General Assembly, and pushed a two-state settlement as the only aim with a "connection with reality" because it is what the majority of UN member states have voted for.

During the discussion round, one speaker from the floor argued that a two-state solution was impossible at this point given the large and numerous Israeli settlements that divide the West Bank. He also observed that it would leave Arabs within Israel without any legal protections. In response Finkelstein admitted that establishing a separate Palestinian state would not solve the question of the settlements, nor do anything for the oppressed Palestinian citizens of Israel, and would in fact do very little to change the conditions of the Palestinians overall. Nonetheless, he averred that it would at least do something to relieve the enduring misery of the people of Palestine. An SYC comrade from the floor argued:

> "As far as a two-state solution goes, in our opinion this solution means confinement in ghettos and ongoing terror at the hands of the Zionist rulers. No Palestinian state will ever be viable in the face of a nuclear-armed Israel. It can only be a cruel joke on the starving, suffering Palestinians.... There can be no just solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict within the framework of capitalism. Two nations claim the same small piece of land, and under capitalism, the exercise of national rights for one necessarily comes at the expense of the other.... [Finkelstein] is building illusions in the UN, which is a den of imperialist thieves and their victims. The UN has only been a tool for the domination of the Palestinians—look at who presided over the 1947 partition of Palestine."

Our speaker raised the 1917 Russian Revolution as our model for the overturn of capitalist rule. At this point Finkelstein cut in: "You're not going to the Russian Revolution!" He insisted that the call for a socialist federation of the Near East was "nonsense" and "morally despicable" because it would never happen and therefore we would be responsible for prolonging the suffering of the Palestinians.

Emboldened by Finkelstein's anti-communism, an Islamic fundamentalist got up to hail the reactionary, anti-woman, CIA-backed *mujahedin* forces who fought the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the 1980s: "Last time socialists tried to suppress Muslims, we saw what happened to the Soviet Union. Don't bring socialism on us when we don't want it. We fought the Russians; we'll fight socialists again if we have to." Low murmuring and nervous laughter rolled over the crowd—heavily composed of observant Muslims, with men and women seated separately and many women in headscarves.

In the late 1970s, when a modernizing Afghan government moved to implement modest reforms for women such as lowering the bride price and instituting education, the tribal *mujahedin* (holy warriors) erupted in violence and terror. Faced with the threat of CIA-backed fundamentalists on its border, in late 1979 the Soviet

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Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism

Two-part article from

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Part One
For a Socialist Federation of the Near East

Montreal: Campus Feminists Fail to Gag Marxists

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *No. 183 (Winter 2014/2015), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League of Canada/Ligue Trotskyste du Canada.*

We Marxist revolutionaries drew the ire of the feminist student bureaucrats at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) this fall when we organized a public meeting titled "Marxism or Feminism: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

The fight against women's oppression is a major issue in Quebec as it is in every capitalist society. Until well into the 20th century the English Canadian rulers maintained the oppression of the Québécois through an alliance with the deeply anti-woman Catholic church. For women this

SPARTACIST CANADA

mostly meant being baby-making machines until either menopause or premature death. The hold of the church was shattered through the social struggles of the 1960s and '70s, but the legacy of this profound oppression is deeply felt in Quebec.

This history has helped to sanctify the ideology of feminism with a status akin to a secular religion. From the bourgeois parties and the petty-bourgeois nationalists of Québec Solidaire (QS) to the reformist left, it is unavoidable. Falsely deemed synonymous with the fight for women's rights, feminism is all that is on offer to young activists concerned about women's oppression. For Marxists, however, the struggle to emancipate women is inseparable from the perspective of working-class revolution to overthrow the capitalist system.

Oletz Verlag

Above: Communist women's demonstration in Moscow, July 1920. Banner reads "Better to fight, suffer and win than to rot for centuries as slaves of the bourgeoisie." Right: Ligue Trotskyste poster counterposing Marxism to feminism was targeted for censorship by student bureaucrats at Montreal campus.

The Roots of Women's Oppression

The oppression of women is rooted in the institution of the family, which arose with the advent of private property as the mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next—the monogamous wife is supposed to ensure the paternity of the heirs. The family serves in general as the social mechanism for rearing the next generation, and under capitalism, where the masses of youth are slated for wage slavery, it seeks to instill obedience to authority. Organized religion and the family enforce social conservatism and conformity to the "family values" ideal. The institution of the family reinforces, as Friedrich Engels put it, "the supremacy of the man over the woman, and the individual family as the economic unit of society" (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, 1884).

The private property system, upheld by the state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be "reformed" away. To succeed in winning freedom for women requires a workers socialist revolution to overturn capitalist property relations. While we fight to defend every gain wrested through hard struggle from this ruling class, the inescapable conclusion must be that the entire capitalist system must go, and a workers state created, which will rest on a collectivized and planned economy where production is for human need, not profit.

Feminism is an obstacle in the struggle for women's liberation because it places the sex line (men vs. women) above the class line (workers vs. capitalists), necessarily tying workers—women and men—to their class enemies. Our meeting challenged the political hegemony of this agenda. In response, our posters were torn down and our event was vilified by the student bureaucracy in a blatant attempt at censorship.

At UQAM, in order to display any posters, one must obtain the approval of one of the student associations, a bureaucratic hurdle with which we complied. We didn't have to wait long for the blowback. When our posters were vandalized, our comrades returned to the AFESH social sciences student association to get more posters approved. We were met by a flat "no" from the student bureaucrats, under the pretext that AFESH could only endorse activities that were "progressive" and feminist.

When we raised the absurdity of blocking an event that supports women's liberation, one student hack replied: "Go put your posters up without stamps and get them torn down." Invoking its "feminist mandate," AFESPED (which represents students in political science and law) also refused to approve the posters. Reflecting the pervasive anti-communism of this milieu, a student bureaucrat even came out against Karl Marx's call, "Workers of the world, unite!" These associations, which are seen as strongholds of student activism in Quebec, chose to censor us rather than politically debate a strategy for the liberation of women.

We object to the whole conception that student associations should adopt "mandates" and political charters since these are inevitably used to censor dissenting ideas. We stand for the democratic right of free expression for all student groups, not least ourselves. We have no interest in silencing our political opponents, including those who uphold this capitalist system which we seek to do away with through socialist revolution. It is precisely through the clash of political opinion that one can actually learn something.

Refusing to be censored, we continued to distribute our Marxist newspapers and promote our meeting. We clearly polarized a section of the campus left. One student activist told us that "everyone is talking about the meeting" and that it had created a real stir. We also took the fight to student general assembly meetings. On September 17, a Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League supporter presented a motion to the AFESPED General Assembly which affirmed: "Since advertising and holding a public meeting is a democratic right and part of freedom of expression, AFESPED should approve the posters for the public meeting on 'Marxism or Feminism: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution'." Over repeated interruptions by the chair, our comrade denounced the political censorship against us and explained that it is only the program of revolutionary Marxism that can open the road to the emancipation of women. Our motion only lost by a narrow margin.

In any case, the censorship bid flopped. Our meeting, held on September 20, was a success, attracting 25 people and featuring lively discussion. The feminists who opposed, it stayed away, content to fraudulently denounce us as indifferent to women's oppression rather than accept our invitation to defend their views in political debate.

Hugues/La Presse

Montreal, October 2013: Feminist contingent at reactionary protest backing "Charter of Quebec Values" that targeted Muslim women, banning the wearing of headscarves by public employees.

Why Marxists Oppose Feminism

Feminism—including its "socialist" or "materialist" variants—is not premised on the destruction of the capitalist system that is the main source of women's oppression today. Rather, it is a bourgeois ideology that seeks to transform the status of women *within this society*. Indeed, many feminists hope merely to advance a layer of women into the boardrooms and the upper reaches of academia and the media.

As the comrade who gave the main talk at our UQAM meeting explained:

> "If you divide society between men and women, as do the feminists of all stripes, you necessarily seek an alliance with all women, including women who are in power, who tenaciously defend capitalism, and who have nothing much to do with women's liberation. Are you really close to the interests of women like [former Parti Québécois premier] Pauline Marois, Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, Margaret Thatcher? Do you think that when the bourgeois government seeks to ban prostitution, this is in order to liberate women?"

The logic of feminism is class collaboration. It also means relying on the bourgeois state to "defend women." The role of the capitalist state is to defend the interests of the capitalists. It has nothing to do

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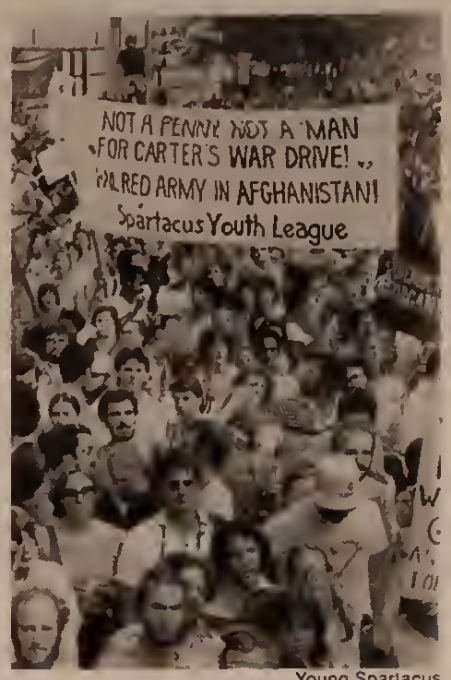
Finkelstein...

(continued from page 8)

Union sent its Red Army into Afghanistan at the invitation of the left-nationalist government in Kabul. The Soviets were not militarily defeated on the battlefield. Rather, in order to appease imperialist pressure, Mikhail Gorbachev criminally withdrew the Soviet troops in 1989. This was a huge betrayal of Afghan women, workers and leftists. It paved the way for the triumph of Washington's woman-hating cutthroats, and for handing the Soviet Union itself over to counterrevolution two years later—a colossal defeat for the workers of the world.

In the face of the fundamentalist's pro-*mujahedin* rant, Finkelstein could not resist a quip: "I'm afraid I may end up with the Spartacist League at that point." Fat chance! In fact, another SYC member tried to respond to this anti-communist attack, but Finkelstein silenced him. The SYC comrade then appealed to the audience: "I have been on this campus defending the Palestinians at every instance, every massacre, every incursion by the Israeli state into the Occupied Territories, and I demand the right to speak right now." This was answered with calls of "let him speak!" and we gained the floor. We received applause for standing up to Finkelstein's demagoguery. But things took an abrupt turn when we addressed the fundamentalist and were met with a cacophony of heckling and shouting. Over the ruckus, our speaker explained: "It was the CIA who backed the Islamic fundamentalists and the Taliban and opposed the Soviet intervention there—so if that's who you want to side with, then that's your business, but *we take a side with the international working class!*"

On this point, he argued: "There's going to be no justice for the Palestinian people until the Zionist garrison state is destroyed from within, and the only people who have the power to do that are the Israeli working class." While we understand that nationalism and anti-Palestinian racism runs very deep in the Jewish Israeli working class, we also know that the interests of the Israeli workers are fundamentally counterposed to their exploiters, the Zionist capitalist class. It is in the interests of Jewish Israeli workers to unite in struggle with foreign-born workers in Israel, the oppressed Palestinian masses and the proletariat of the surrounding Arab states to overthrow their common oppressors. This possibility seems remote at present, but nevertheless joint working-class revolutionary struggle is the only way to cut the Gordian knot of the current conflict, and it is the goal to which fighters for liberation of the Palestinian people must set themselves. Furthermore, serious class struggle in a neighboring country, for example Egypt, could effect a change in consciousness very quickly.



Young Spartacus

Spartacists at 1980 New York City anti-draft protest hail Red Army intervention in Afghanistan against CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries.

Afterward, several people came up to us and said they had defended our right to speak and opposed those shouting us down. But what of the RSCC Maoists? True to form, these self-proclaimed revolutionaries reacted to the "spectre of Communism" at the event by joining the attempt to silence us. In fact, prominent RSCC member Taffadar Sourav came across the room in an attempt to do just that as our comrade was defending the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Perhaps such despicable antics are meant to assure its SJP cohorts that, when push comes to shove, the RSCC would prefer to embrace anything—from liberal illusions in the UN to religious fundamentalism—other than Marxism.

It is fitting that the new generation of Maoists made a bloc with Finkelstein, a former Maoist who now denounces his past, against the Spartacists. Finkelstein might have thrown away his little Red Book, but he shares with the Maoists a program of bowing before existing consciousness and making liberal appeals to the imperialists.■

Montreal...

(continued from page 9)

with ending the misery of the oppressed!

A perfect illustration of the bankruptcy of this strategy, which can only reinforce the repressive forces of the state, is the former [bourgeois nationalist] Parti Québécois government's Charter of Quebec Values. Cynically touted as a defense of secularism and equality between men and women, this proposed law would have banned the wearing of "conspicuous" religious symbols by anyone who works in public or publicly funded institutions. It would have meant the firing of large numbers of Muslim women workers and would have barred the few Muslim women in Quebec who wear the full-face veil (*niqab*) from receiving government services.

The Charter unleashed a wave of anti-Muslim bigotry and also exposed divisions within the Québécois feminist milieus. A "March of the Janettes"—named for the elderly pioneer feminist Janette Bertrand—brought out thousands of [Quebec flag] fleur de lys-waving Charter supporters. The main feminist group, the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (Quebec Federation of Women), opposed banning women wearing religious garb from government jobs but said that fully veiled women should be banned because their *niqabs* "hinder communication."

For its part, Québec Solidaire backed the proposed ban on public services for women wearing the *niqab*. The feminist sisterhood may be powerful, as the saying goes, but it doesn't include fully veiled Muslim women. In their embrace of nationalist reaction, these feminists clearly have nothing to offer minority and working-class women. As we noted in our article opposing the Charter:

> "Despite important gains like abortion rights and formal legal equality, the secular ***bourgeois*** Quebec that emerged from the [1960s-'70s] Quiet Revolution remains a ruthlessly exploitative society that offers no road to the liberation of women (or anyone else)."
>
> —"No to Reactionary 'Charter of Quebec Values'!" *SC* No. 179, Winter 2013/2014

Among the groups that give a more leftist colouration to feminism is the reformist Front d'Action Socialiste (FAS), with origins in the Montreal student milieu. Formed in spring 2014, FAS is not part of QS, but a FAS member was on the communications team for this petty-bourgeois populist party in the recent elections. So much for FAS's socialist pretentions!

FAS declares that it is "resolutely feminist," asserting that "patriarchy" is a "structure of oppression" that "does not depend solely on capitalism" and that "specific struggle against patriarchy is necessary to end the oppression that women experience" (*FAS*, April 2014). Another FAS statement affirms: "Feminism is a movement of emancipation that seeks to abolish the inequalities between men and women, like those we have confronted in the workplace. To be a feminist is to refuse to be submissive and docile" ("The Reality of Women in the Workplace," undated).

This is a purely ***individualist*** response to the ***social*** fact of women's oppression. It cannot be ended through a "struggle against patriarchy" or a fight against "docility." To quote Marx and Engels, "'Liberation' is an historical and not a mental act." The liberation of women can only be achieved by overthrowing capitalist rule. This alone will lay the material basis for replacing the family and its functions.

Marxism: The Program for Women's Liberation

Our model is the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which overthrew capitalism and laid the foundations for an egalitarian society. The Bolsheviks understood that without qualitative economic development, the liberation of women was a utopian fantasy. Nevertheless, the new workers state did all that it could to implement the promise of women's emancipation (see "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women," *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 59, Spring 2006). A new law provided for fully paid maternity leave and nursing breaks, while public nurseries were instituted in workplaces. Two decrees established civil marriage, as well as divorce at the request of either partner. As well, homosexuality and abortion were legalized. Many of these achievements are lacking even today in the most advanced capitalist societies. The Russian Revolution did more for women's liberation than 100 years of feminism, and this is despite its later Stalinist degeneration which reversed many of the gains made by women.

From the earliest years of our tendency, the struggle for women's liberation has been central to our perspectives. This included publication of the journal *Women and Revolution* (which today appears in the International Communist League's theoretical journal, *Spartacist*). On the front page of the first issue, a "Women's Revolutionary Manifesto" declared: "Our goal is not equality in slavery, but an *end* to slavery! We don't seek liberation *from* men, but liberation *with* men!... To struggle for the liberation of women is to struggle for socialism" (May-June 1971). We are dedicated to building a revolutionary party that will lead the struggle for socialist revolution. Women will play a leading role in constructing such a party, the necessary instrument for the liberation of the working class and all the oppressed.■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, March 4, 7 p.m.

U.S. Imperialism Hands off the World! Down With U.S. War Against I.S.I.S.

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 3150

Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Monday, March 9, 7 p.m.

The Russian Revolution of 1917, Part 2

CCNY, NAC Room 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)

Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL website:
www.icl-fi.org

TORONTO

Thursday, February 26, 6:30 p.m.

Down With Ottawa's "Anti-Terror" Laws!

"War on Terror": Marauding Abroad, Repression at Home

U of T, OISE, Room 2199
252 Bloor St West
(at St. George subway)

Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, February 25, 6:30 p.m.

From Ferguson to Vancouver: Down With Racist Cop Terror!

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.

Marxism vs. Feminism: What Way Forward for Women's Liberation?

University of British Columbia
Irving Barber Learning Centre, Rm. 315

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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Imperialism...

(continued from page 7)

on stock trading or banking or tea, coffee, chocolate, ostentatious spending and high living...well that was Amsterdam all over, not London. And for venal exploitation, corruption and brutal colonialism, you couldn't top the Dutch East India Company. But the rising British bourgeoisie was a quick study. Eventually the Dutch were beaten, blockaded and otherwise forced to accept Cromwell's Navigation Act. The English bought up, captured or sank scads of Dutch merchant ships.

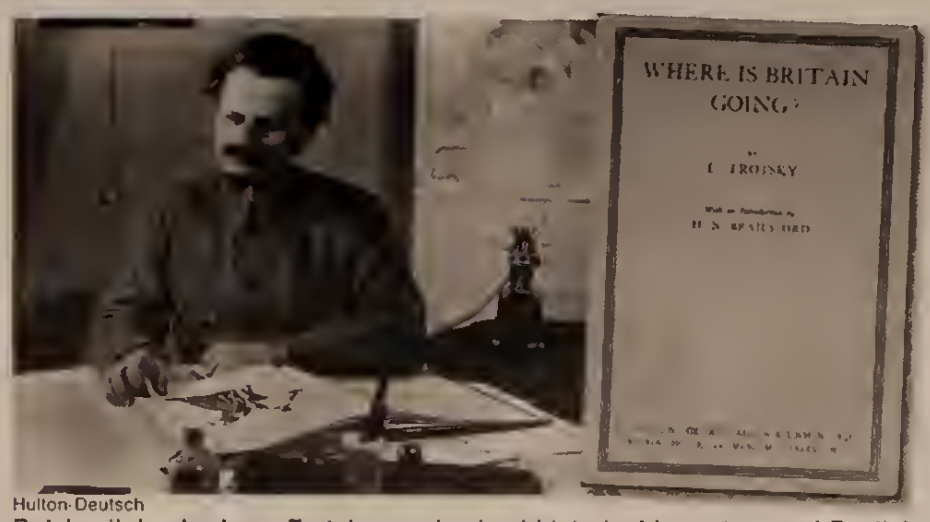
And while I am on the subject, that was another advantage the British possessed: they were able to concentrate on building up their navy. Whereas the continental powers had to maintain huge land-based armies, the British could get by with much smaller and less costly strategic forces. And they could be rapidly deployed as fast as the wind—literally—as they were carried by the navy with its big guns and dropped practically anywhere. The British perfected naval military warfare through a century and more of practice against the Dutch, Spanish, Ottoman pirates and privateers, but mostly against the French. That power to project the armed might of the British ruling class anywhere in the world loomed large with the later rise of British imperialism.

The Restoration and After

The landed nobility derisively called the bourgeoisie Whigs, which is thought to come from the Scottish *whiggamor* or cattle driver, because they had mobilized the plebeian masses during the Civil War. And that became the name associated with bourgeois liberalism—the supporters of a constitutional monarchy in which the monarch shared power with a parliament representing wealthy men of property. As comrade Joseph Seymour noted, "liberalism represented the interests of the bourgeoisie as against the landed nobility on the right and the workers and peasants on the left" (*Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism*, Spartacist pamphlet, 1998). The landed nobles resented the wealth and power of Parliament and supported a strong monarchy against that.

The English bourgeoisie learned something from gaining political power with Cromwell's Commonwealth and then losing it after his death when the nobles succeeded in restoring the monarchy and placing Charles II on the throne. Charles inherited Cromwell's navy, renamed it the Royal Navy and promptly dispatched it to capture New Amsterdam (New York). By the by, Charles II is the guy who signed off on the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly in 1670. The monarchist party of the landed nobility then came to be known derisively as Tories from the Irish word *tóraí*, which meant a robber. That was not because of the Hudson's Bay Company—it was because they stole the power from "the people."

The Royalists exhumed Cromwell's body, and he and his confederates, both living and dead, were most gruesomely executed. Cromwell's head was stuck on a spike above Westminster Hall and put on display for a quarter century. But the restoration of the monarchy didn't end well for the nobility. Their guy proved a little too sympathetic to the Catholic church. The Scots in particular had a rough time. I mean, first they got beaten with a stick by Cromwell, then when their guy finally gets on the throne he decides to force the Presbyterian Scots to kiss his royal arse, as it were. Well, these were John Knox's people—who were not well known for supplicating any worldly monarch. It is not for nothing that Charles II's gruesome repression of the 1680s was known as "the Killing Time" in Scotland.



Hulton-Deutsch

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky emphasized historical importance of English bourgeois revolution in 1925 pamphlet "Where Is Britain Going?"

Meanwhile, the English bourgeoisie regroups and enlists the aid of the Dutch Protestant William III of Orange to put down Charles' successor, the Catholic James II. William is only too happy to oblige, providing Parliament will help with his ongoing war with France. So, William is invited to take the English throne; he comes to town with a gigantic armada, four times the size of the earlier Spanish one. They have a gigantic party; he assumes the throne and signs all sorts of proclamations securing Parliament's position in governance. James meanwhile is allowed to scurry off across to the continent.

This, the so-called Glorious Revolution, is henceforth lauded as the foundation of the modern constitutional monarchy which enshrined by law a Protestant succession to the crown, and moreover, the constitutional supremacy of Parliament over the king.

This process is mythologized by the ruling class as the "glorious" dawn of true British democracy. However, for black Africans, it represented something else again. By ending the Duke of York's Royal African Company monopoly on the African slave trade in 1698, the "Glorious Revolution" heralded not the broadening of freedom but the massive expansion of slavery, horrendous servitude in the broiling sun of the British sugar colonies. And that is what truly began to build up the wealth that underwrote the British Empire.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

ILWU...

(continued from page 12)

2014). Stabbed in the back by the labor traitors at the head of the S.F. Central Labor Council who ended the general strike, the longshore workers were forced into the very arbitration process they had repeatedly rejected. But they returned to work armed with confidence in their power as a class.

Through subsequent job actions, longshore workers established work rules and conditions in defiance of the terms of the arbitrated settlement. These actions and further strikes also solidified the union's control of the hiring halls, a gain of the 1934 strike. From 1934 to 1948, there were four coastwide strikes, more than 20 major port strikes and some 1,300 minor local work stoppages. It was not until after the 1948 strike that the bosses were able to impose a ban on strikes during the life of the contract.

The 1948 Strike: Union-Busting and Anti-Communism

The 1948 strike broke out not long after the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in June 1947. The shipping bosses had seized on one of the act's provisions, which outlawed the closed shop, in an attempt to dismantle the union hiring hall, but the 1948 ILWU strike spiked this effort. Uniquely, the strike also beat back the Taft-Hartley mandate that union leaders sign anti-Communist affidavits.

After nearly 90 percent of the union membership voted to strike, Harry Truman's Democratic Party administration ordered an 80-day "cooling off" period under Taft-Hartley. As part of this directive, the National Labor Relations Board put the employers' final offer to the membership for a vote. ***Not one ballot was cast by the more than 26,000 longshore workers.*** When the ILWU put that offer from the bosses to its own vote, it was rejected by close to 97 percent. In the same ballot, 94 percent of the membership also voted against the demand that ILWU president Harry Bridges and other union leaders swear an oath of anti-Communism, rebuking the red scare tactics of the bosses.

The 95-day strike began on 2 September 1948. Throughout, the ILWU ranks maintained a solid front in the face of the employers' redbaiting frenzy. The threat to the profitability of West Coast shipping did, however, provoke increasing divisions among the employers, then grouped in the Waterfront Employers Association (WEA). The anti-Communist, union-busting war horse who headed the WEA was shunted aside by employers who saw a greater percentage in trying to co-opt the union.

The settlement was heralded as the beginning of a new spirit of cooperation between the ILWU and the shipping bosses. Key was the inclusion of a provision banning any strikes or work stoppages during the life of the contract. A new system of arbitration, which included a coastwide arbitrator chosen jointly by the union and the employers and empowered to make the final decision on any dispute, was put in place. Labor peace was effectively secured. There would not be another ILWU coastwide strike until 1971, 23 years later.

That strike was essentially forced on the Bridges leadership by a union membership seething over massive job losses resulting from the 1960 Mechanization and Modernization Agreement (M&M), which Bridges had negotiated and shoved down the workers' throats. Although winning a retroactive wage increase, the 1971 strike lost on the central issue of abolishing the "steady men" category introduced with containerization. These skilled workers report directly to stevedoring companies, bypassing and undermining the union hiring hall.

Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win!

The introduction of container shipping in the late 1950s and early '60s brought a sea change at the ports. The amount of cargo skyrocketed and the man-hour requirements dropped dramatically. The M&M agreement gave the PMA a virtual free hand in eliminating longshore jobs in exchange for a pay guarantee plan for those workers still lucky enough to have a job. The longshore membership of the ILWU was slashed from 65,000 in 1959 to 10,500 in 2001. It now stands at 14,000, reflecting the expansion of West Coast shipping. The present negotiations also take place amid big changes in shipping and automation at the U.S. ports.

The ILWU is today up against even larger conglomerates of shipping magnates who are looking to corner the market with new mega-ships that can carry the equivalent of 19,000 twenty-foot containers. On the ground, the TraPac stevedoring company at the L.A./Long Beach port is building an extensively automated terminal where remote-controlled cranes able to stack containers as well as guided carts that move containers into the yard will do work once handled by longshoremen. Many of these innovations have already been introduced at various ports worldwide.

The ILWU leadership's answer to increasing automation has been to demand that the union have exclusive jurisdiction over maintenance and repair of equipment. The 2008 contract included language conceding these jobs to the union (except at the few terminals where other unions already did the work). ILWU members have long inspected and repaired the chassis that move containers into and out of the yards. But over the last year, the shipping companies have sold off their chassis to leasing companies who maintain their fleets at off-dock facilities. In its latest contract offer, the PMA accedes to the union's demand that ILWU members continue to inspect and repair chassis leaving the terminals. But that may well be an empty promise since the trucking and chassis leasing companies have vowed to fight the provision in court.

Although largely skirmishes, such actions as the ILWU has taken at the West Coast ports demonstrate the union's continued power. At the same time, the ILWU increasingly looks like a man desperately trying to go up a rapidly descending escalator. Merely trying to hold on isn't going to cut it. Although the PMA may currently be biding its time, claiming to offer "generous" increases in wages and benefits, its appetite was whetted by the ILWU's recent contract settlements with grain-shipping companies in the Pacific Northwest, which essentially gut the union hiring hall (see "Showdown Brewing at West Coast Ports," *WV* No. 1056, 14 November 2014).

The very concentration and centralization of the shipping industry that the ILWU is up against also gives longshore workers enormous potential power. But to realize that power, the ILWU must flex its muscle in a fighting alliance with other port unions, as opposed to the all-sided jurisdictional warfare engaged in by the trade-union misleaders to preserve their piece of a greatly shrunken dues base. A case in point is the mutual backstabbing of the ILWU and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) bureaucrats in the Pacific Northwest. Union electricians crossed the picket lines of ILWU members locked out by United Grain in Washington State two years ago, while the ILWU in cahoots with the PMA has sought to poach IBEW jobs in Portland.

Any serious fight to restore the power of the ILWU must begin with the understanding that the workers have common interests that are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the employers. The answer to jobs lost to automation is to fight to restore the six-hour day, one of the union's first achievements, at no loss in pay to spread the available work around. There must be a fight to organize the growing mass of unorganized workers at the ports, such as the port truckers and intermodal rail facility workers, who are crucial to the movement of cargo. To build working-class unity, the union must combat the anti-immigrant racism that is wielded to enforce the brutal exploitation of workers, from port trucking to the vast inland warehouses.

What made the difference in the 1934 longshore and Minneapolis truckers strikes—as well as strike battles by auto parts workers in Toledo that same year—was that the workers were politically and organizationally armed by leaders who understood that the only possibility for victory lay in mobilizing their power as a class against the capitalist class enemy. As we wrote in Part Two of "Then and Now":

> "The 1934 strikes showed what militant unions could accomplish in a period of growing class and social discontent. Under a leadership that grasped the class nature of American capitalist society and the social power of those whose labor makes it run, the workers fought against improbable odds and won. These are the kind of battles that will need to be waged today to organize the growing masses of unorganized workers. For the workers to prevail over their exploiters, it is essential to win them to a Marxist political program that links labor's fight to the building of a multiracial revolutionary workers party capable of leading the struggle to do away with this whole system of wage slavery through socialist revolution."■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Semi-Lockout on West Coast Ports

Shipping Bosses Escalate Offensive Against ILWU

February 12: Cranes stand idle in Los Angeles port.

FEBRUARY 16—Seven months after the expiration of its contract with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), representing West Coast shipping and terminal bosses, is trying to force the union into submission by slashing work for longshoremen. In early January, the employers canceled most night shifts loading and unloading ships. Defying logic, the PMA argued that stopping such work was necessary to "relieve congestion" at ports up and down the coast where unloaded ships are at anchor. For the past two weeks, this semi-lockout has been extended to weekends and holidays, shifts for which longshore workers earn overtime pay. Ranting that the ILWU had orchestrated work slowdowns, a PMA spokesman declared: "What they're doing amounts to a strike with pay, and we will reduce the extent to which we pay premium rates for such a strike."

As attested to by no less an authority than the head of the Federal Maritime Commission, the growing gridlock on the docks owes much to the shipping bosses themselves. They invested in building container ships that can carry almost double the load without ensuring that there was adequate rail, trucking and other infrastructure to move the cargo out of the ports. But in truth, the PMA's howls over congestion are largely an invention. Photos taken by the ILWU show acres of empty space at port terminals where containers could readily be offloaded.

The employers' purpose is to provoke a sense of crisis in West Coast shipping and blame it on the union. Most of the bourgeois media is on board, trying to stoke a public outcry against "greedy" longshoremen by reporting vastly inflated annual wages and benefits. With members of Congress demanding that Obama "use all tools at his disposal" to end the showdown, including the slave-labor Taft-Hartley law, the Democratic Party president dispatched his labor secretary to broker a settlement. One need look no further than the armed Coast Guard ships that the Obama White House readied to use against the ILWU in its 2011-12 battle with the union-busting EGT grain consortium in Longview, Washington, to dispel any illusions that the Democrats are on the union's side.

Promoting what it describes as a "generous contract," the PMA is squeezing union members by denying them work, hoping to provoke disgruntlement in the ranks in order to divide and defeat the ILWU. As the *Journal of Commerce* (10 February), the industry's publication of record, commented: "The employers' strategy is to convince the rank and file that ILWU negotiators do not have their best interests in mind." The ILWU International leadership has played right into the PMA's hand. Keeping their membership on the job ever since the July 1 contract expiration, the union bureaucrats have also kept the ranks completely in the dark about negotiations and failed to prepare them for any kind of actual struggle.

Farrell Dobbs, one of the Trotskyist leaders of the 1934 Minneapolis strikes that laid the basis for forging the Teamsters as an industrial union, insisted on the importance of an informed and mobilized membership during contract negotiations, writing in his book *Teamster Rebellion* (1972):

> "It is a mistake under any circumstances for union negotiators to deal with bosses or government mediators on the basis that they have authority to make a compromise. Once a concession has been made under heavy pressure, which comes especially from the boss-controlled government agents, the action can be reversed only with the greatest difficulty, if at all.... Consequently, whenever any question of a compromise arises, negotiators should always say they will have to take the matter back to the union for a decision. This procedure is not only a safeguard against bureaucratic malpractice, it is the best course for union representatives who want to do the right thing."

Every year, the ILWU memorializes "Bloody Thursday," the day when striking workers were killed by police trying to break the 1934 West Coast waterfront strike. But the ILWU bureaucracy today, as it has for many decades, foreswears the methods of independent class struggle that forged the union. Far from looking to mobilize the power of the ILWU in alliance with other port unions and workers, the labor misleaders are busy lobbying Democratic Party Congressmen. At the same time, the ILWU International's split from the AFL-CIO in 2013—the outgrowth of increasingly ugly jurisdictional turf wars—combined with its American-chauvinist rants against "these foreign-owned companies" have only further isolated the longshore union from its potential *class allies* in the U.S. and internationally.

The Trap of Arbitration, the Bosses' Tool

The PMA's latest charge is that the ILWU is threatening to sink the contract talks by demanding the right to unilaterally fire area arbitrators currently appointed by joint ILWU-PMA area committees. While railing against the ILWU, a PMA spokesman pointed to the arbitration system as "an essential check-and-balance against illegal labor actions." And so it is. The purpose of these purported "neutral" arbitrators *is* to enforce class peace on behalf of the employers by putting a halt to work actions. According to PMA statistics, from 2008-14, the life of the last contract, there were some 250 disputes involving allegations of work slowdowns or stoppages. The arbitrators ruled against the union in more than 85 percent of these cases.

Of course, no one, including the ILWU ranks, has any idea what the union leaders are demanding, because they're not saying. Nonetheless, even by the PMA's own account the ILWU negotiators are merely asking that arbitrators be appointed only for the life of a contract and that both the union and the PMA have the right to veto their reappointment. That is, the ILWU leadership is merely trying to tinker with the system of arbitration, which along with the no-strike provision in the contract has no other purpose than to prevent the union from exercising its power. The idea of a pro-union arbitrator is as big a fraud as the trade-union bureaucracy's promotion of the capitalist Democratic Party as the "friend of labor."

At the core of such scams is the lie that the workers have interests in common with the capitalist rulers, whose profits are secured through relentlessly trying to drive up the rate of exploitation of labor. The main weapon that the workers have is to cut off the flow of profits, the bosses' lifeblood, by withdrawing their labor power in strikes and other actions based on the collective strength and solidarity of their class. Which side prevails in any battle is determined by the relative strength of forces on either side.

The class battles of 1934 that forged a mighty West Coast longshore union were waged in defiance not only of the strike-breaking forces of the capitalist state but also of demands that the workers submit to arbitration. Instead of putting their fate in the hands of an arbitrator, they fought back by mobilizing their class power with such militancy and determination that the maritime strike inspired an avalanche of support from the rest of labor, culminating in the four-day San Francisco general strike (see "Then and Now," *WV* Nos. 1050 and 1051, 8 August and 5 September

continued on page 11

San Francisco, 1948: During longshore strike, ILWU members picket government hearings targeting union leaders in anti-Communist witchhunt.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1063 6 March 2015

Obama, Congress Squabble Over Immigration Reform Scam

No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights!

Left: U.S. Border Patrol rounds up immigrants, Texas, 2014. Right: Mass uprising of immigrants protesting wretched conditions at Willacy County Correctional Center was suppressed by police, February 20.

While the vast majority of undocumented immigrants continue to live in misery under an ever-present threat of imprisonment and deportation, the White House and prominent Republicans are wrangling over the executive actions on immigration policy announced in November by the president. In the latest scene in Washington's political theater, Congressional Republicans have blustered about cutting off funding to the entire Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in order to spike Obama's proposal to provide more immigrants temporary relief from deportation. But the government was never about to disrupt the core activities of the DHS, which include securing the borders and enforcing the customs and immigration laws. With both sides agreeing on the need to put immigrants fully under the thumb of the capitalist state, the debate is over the best mix of repression and exploitation to advance the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

Deporter-in-Chief Barack Obama has done his part to terrorize immigrants, having overseen the deportation of over two million people, more than any other president. The White House brags that there are 3,000 additional border agents patrolling the Southwest today compared to 2008, with border fencing and surveillance systems having doubled over the same period. Obama's executive actions seek to further beef up border security. Meanwhile, the president has requested additional funding to confine more immigrants in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers than the daily quota of 34,000 mandated by Congress.

Last summer, after the arrival of thousands upon thousands fleeing horrific violence and grinding poverty in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, ICE revived its policy of locking up women and children seeking asylum. The horrendous conditions in those countries are largely

continued on page 11

Pasco, Washington

Mexican Worker Shot Dead by Cops

Antonio Zambrano-Montes, a 35-year-old Mexican immigrant from Michoacán, had his hands up. Fired at 17 times, he was killed by police in Pasco, Washington, on February 10. Zambrano had recently lost his job as a farmworker because he fell off a ladder and broke both wrists. He lived in a shelter after having lost his home in a fire, left with nothing. Like many who risk their lives to escape the deplorable conditions imposed on their home countries by U.S. imperialism and its local lackeys, Zambrano had come to *El Norte* looking for work. He ended up in the fields owned by the American capitalists who make staggering profits from the exploitation of cheap immigrant labor.

The cop killing of Zambrano was filmed. The same was true for Eric Garner in New York as well as a homeless man known as "Africa" in Los Angeles last week, both casualties of the daily police violence meted out to black people in cities across the country. For allegedly throwing rocks, Zambrano was chased across a busy intersection, shot from behind and then executed in cold blood on the sidewalk. As always, bourgeois mouthpieces smeared the victim to make it appear that he deserved what he got. Many activists see the parallels between the killings of Zambrano and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, who were both vilified by authorities after the police had blown them away and left their lifeless bodies lying on the ground.

Bose/NY Times/Redux

Pasco, February 14: Protesters carry posters of Antonio Zambrano-Montes, killed by cops four days earlier.

Around 1,000 people demonstrated against police brutality in Pasco on February 14. We solidarize with their anger and desire to end this raw terror. However, the bitter truth is that the only way to eliminate police brutality is to do away with the system of racist American capitalism, for which the thugs in blue are the front line of defense.

Some signs at the Pasco demonstration included calls for the police to protect, not kill, while others read: "Buenos policías, los respetamos" (Good cops, we respect you). But the very job of the police is to protect the property and profits of the capitalist class, and to violently repress and intimidate workers, the oppressed and those at the bottom of society. By the lights of the capitalist rulers, the "good cops" are the ones who bust up picket lines, terrorize blacks and crack the whip against immigrants. As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* (1917), the cops are at the core of the capitalist state, which is "an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another."

continued on page 11

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In Honor of International Women's Day

VAAP

Women workers demonstrate in Petrograd, March 1917. Banner reads: "If Women Are Slaves There Can Be No Freedom—Long Live Women's Equality." "Women and Revolution" article published in *Spartacist* No. 59 (Spring 2006); order from Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 ($1.50).

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 was a beacon of liberation for the working and impoverished masses worldwide. At a time when women in the most democratic capitalist countries were denied even the right to vote, the young Soviet workers state undertook pioneering efforts toward the liberation of women.

Although many of the advances of the Revolution were reversed under the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which usurped political power from the proletariat in 1923-24, the central gains of the revolution, embodied in the overthrow of capitalist property relations and the establishment of a planned economy, remained. Before capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, women in the Soviet Union enjoyed many advantages, such as state-supported childcare institutions, full abortion rights, access to a wide range of trades and professions and a large degree of economic equality with their male coworkers—in short, a status in some ways far in advance of capitalist societies.

To this day, millions of women in the advanced capitalist countries endure lives of misery and drudgery. In the U.S., despite formal legal equality, abortion rights are under sustained attack and quality childcare is scarce and costly. To end women's oppression, which is rooted in the institution of the family, will require building a socialist society of material abundance, in which child rearing and other functions now performed by the family will be the responsibility of society as a whole. The struggle for women's liberation is inseparable from the fight for international workers revolution.

We reprint below a 1921 address given by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin to mark the March 8 workers holiday, International Women's Day.

"International Working Women's Day"

4 March 1921

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and the plunder of the people's labour by the capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way—and there can be no other way—out of the wage-slavery and bondage of capitalism.

But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing in the women as well. For under capitalism the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly—and this is the main thing—they remain in "household bondage," they continue to be "household slaves," for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid, backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the family household.

No party or revolution in the world has ever dreamed of striking so deep at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as the Soviet, Bolshevik revolution is doing. Over here, in Soviet Russia, no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law. The Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and inequality in respect of children.

This is only the first step in the liberation of woman. But none of the bourgeois republics, including the most democratic, has dared to take even this first step. The reason is awe of "sacrosanct private property."

The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from "household bondage" through transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialised domestic services.

This transition is a difficult one, because it involves the remoulding of the most deep-rooted, inveterate, hidebound and rigid "order" (indecency and barbarity would be nearer the truth). But the transition has been started, the thing has been set in motion, we have taken the new path.

And so on this international working women's day countless meetings of working women in all countries of the world will send greetings to Soviet Russia, which has been the first to tackle this unparalleled and incredibly hard but great task, a task that is universally great and truly liberatory. There will be bracing calls not to lose heart in face of the fierce and frequently savage bourgeois reaction. The "freer" or "more democratic" a bourgeois country is, the wilder the rampage of its gang of capitalists against the workers' revolution, an example of this being the democratic republic of the United States of North America. But the mass of workers have already awakened. The dormant, somnolent and inert masses in America, Europe and even in backward Asia were finally roused by the imperialist war.

The ice has been broken in every corner of the world.

Nothing can stop the tide of the peoples' liberation from the imperialist yoke and the liberation of working men and women from the yoke of capital. This cause is being carried forward by tens and hundreds of millions of working men and women in town and countryside. That is why this cause of labour's freedom from the yoke of capital will triumph all over the world.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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No. 1063 **6 March 2015**

Letter

Boston: Workers Plowed Under

Boston, MA
19 February 2015

To Workers Vanguard:

As I look out my window here at work it is snowing yet again. The uninterrupted barrage of snowstorms that began January 26 has brought us in excess of 90 inches of snowfall and has all but crippled the city of Boston.

As I'm sure you have read, the biggest impact has been the crippling effect on the extremely antiquated rapid transit system, which has been completely shut down for a total of 3 days. Entire sections of the Red Line are closed and passengers are being shunted onto shuttle buses which as often as not over the past couple of weeks have failed to show up leaving passengers waiting for hours in the frigid temperatures. A friend speculated this was climate change meets utter infrastructure fail. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA" or "T") has been groaning under extreme overcrowding together with extremely aged out subway and commuter rail train sets. Now as the incoming governor Baker intones that the system's performance is unacceptable he has announced at least $40M in cuts to it!! And to hoot he recently announced the use of prison labor to clean the train tracks!!

This has provided additional forward momentum to continue the onslaught against public employee unions, particularly the unionized T workforce. In point of fact the workforce has bent over backwards to try to keep the stations clear of snow and to clear the tracks. On WGBH radio, Jim Braude, a "liberal" talk radio host, had a program a few days ago all about how the workforce was too overcompensated and harping on the necessity of cutting pensions and outsourcing. Braude was discussing it as if there was no question about it. They complained about how people were being paid $30/hour to clean off tracks. So union busting is clearly where they're going with this. The good news was the poll today that had Baker's popularity well below former MBTA manager Beverly Scott's—people can see that he's letting the T swing in the wind. And the riding public is by and large not blaming the workers. Everyone knows that the legislature has repeatedly refused to fund it adequately.

It is strange that there has been very little coverage of how the homeless population is faring during this brutal weather. No douht the shelters are full to overflowing and there are many people freezing to death on the streets rather than venture into the shelters.

All in all the past few weeks have provided us with a chemically pure example of capitalist irrationality!

Terry M.

Jeff Higgins

WV Photo

1949–2015

Our comrade Jeff Higgins, for many years a powerful spokesman for the Labor Black League for Social Defense, died in his sleep in the second week of February. He was 65 years old. We share the sorrow and tremendous sense of loss with his mother, sisters and the rest of his family.

Jeff was the oldest son of a black working-class family in Pasadena, California, where racial segregation rivaled the Jim Crow South. He grew up amid the battles of the civil rights movement and the explosions of ghetto anger against cop terror. Influenced by the Black Panther Party's militant black nationalism and their eclectic conceptions of "Marxism-Leninism," Jeff fought for black studies programs and protested against U.S. imperialism's dirty war in Vietnam as a student at the University of California at Riverside.

Don Alexander, a longtime leading cadre of the Spartacist League/U.S., described the bond he forged with Jeff at UC Riverside as the two black campus radicals "fought to become communists." Both joined the campus Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), youth group of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The small but highly political branch was dissolved after it led a revolt against the SWP having dropped its call for "free abortion on demand" in order to placate bourgeois feminists who deemed the slogan far too radical.

In his application for membership in the Spartacist League/U.S., Jeff wrote: "One of the basic motivations throughout my political development was to construct an understanding of the tasks posed by the special oppression of blacks" and "to do this on the basis of a Marxist world view." He rejected the SWP's simultaneous pandering to black cultural nationalists and to the liberal NAACP as an obstacle to the fight for black liberation. Recalling Jeff's contempt for the cultural nationalists—who strutted around in their dashikis and "struggle boots," baiting the two for associating with white radicals—Don noted, "It didn't escape our notice that these poverty pimps were tolerated by the bourgeoisie while the Panthers were being killed."

The demise of the Panthers under the hammer blows of state repression and internal splits ushered in a wave of demoralization among many black radicals. But, together with their experience in the YSA, it propelled both Jeff and Don to hit the books and study the writings and history of the Marxist movement. They began investigating other organizations that claimed to uphold the revolutionary internationalist program of Trotskyism. Moving to the Bay Area in 1974, they sought out the Spartacist League. Through a process of political discussion and struggle, they were won to the understanding that the only road to black freedom lies in the united class struggle of black and white workers led by a multiracial vanguard party to shatter the system of racist American capitalism through socialist revolution. In 1977, Jeff submitted his membership application.

Jeff began an apprentice program to become a unionized electrician and fought against great odds to get his journeyman's papers. Confronted with the prejudices of the building trades unions, which were mostly lily-white, male job trusts, Jeff withstood a level of anti-black racism that might have broken many. In 1985, the administration of San Francisco General Hospital drew up plans to build a separate toilet facility to ensure that Jeff, the only black electrician on the job, would not use the same facilities as white carpenters and painters. The Bay Area LBL organized a 60-strong protest, which drew more than a dozen other hospital workers on the receiving end of racist treatment by the administration, to demand: "Down with Jim Crow—No to White-Only Toilets!" When addressing the rally, which took place at a time of rising anti-apartheid protest, Jeff observed: "They don't want to use the same bathrooms as a black man.... This is South Africa right here in San Francisco."

Jeff was unable to maintain the discipline and commitments of party membership. But his programmatic convictions never wavered. As a member of the LBL, he played a leadership role in the group and was more often than not a spokesman at our anti-racist and other actions. He was with us in April 1984 when Richard Bradley, a supporter of the Spartacist League, scaled a flagpole in S.F.'s Civic Center plaza to tear down the Confederate flag. A photo in *Workers Vanguard* shows Jeff doing the honor of burning the hated "stars and bars" banner of slavery and Klan terror. After then-S.F. Democratic mayor "Dixie Diane" Feinstein put the flag back up, we took it down again. When Bradley was put on trial on charges of vandalism, Jeff was a witness for his defense.

In 1993, when stories of the Jim Crow treatment of black people at Denny's restaurants hit the press, Jeff pushed for the LBL to mobilize nationwide protests. Hearing that there was some concern that holding these protests on the July 4 weekend would look "patriotic," Jeff pointed to the 1852 speech by Frederick Douglass on "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro":

> "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages."

Douglass' speech became part of our early efforts to mobilize for these protests, which drew hundreds of people from coast to coast, including support from several multiracial unions.

In January 1994, Jeff was the LBL speaker at our mobilization to stop a racist provocation by the KKK on the MLK holiday weekend in Springfield, Illinois. Covered in snow and buffeted by subzero temperatures, Jeff captured our perspective of "black and red" with his usual eloquence:

> "What frightens America's capitalist rulers most is militant, integrated working-class struggle, black and white together, organized and disciplined, independent of the bosses' political machine and their waterboys in the trade-union bureaucracy. The only road open to real black freedom is in the building of a workers state—the organization of an egalitarian socialist society where workers of all races directly share in, and determine to what use is put, the wealth which their sweat and sacrifices create!"

The many comrades who witnessed him stir a crowd all recall Jeff's ability to engage by conveying both his hatred of black oppression and his satisfaction in fighting it. This included the fight to free former Panthers like Geronimo Pratt and Mumia Abu-Jamal, who were framed up and imprisoned for the very courage and militancy that had inspired Jeff in his youth. Jeff's talents were also on display as chair of the LBL-initiated 2002 rally in Oakland where for the first time organized labor was mobilized in defense of its immigrant brothers and sisters targeted under the "war on terror."

Defiant and proud, Jeff had a heart as big as his build and a laugh to match. His anger fueled his ability to survive and fight but it also led to some wrong turns in his life. He had an extensive library and was a voracious reader hungry for knowledge, understanding the importance of studying the class battles of the past to apply the lessons to the present. Jeff's work on party facilities was a testament to his skill as an electrician and painstaking attention to detail. He had more than his share of painful losses, particularly the 1992 murder of his then-companion Martha Phillips in Moscow, where she was a leader in the International Communist League's fight to reimplant the program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party against the drive to counterrevolution that destroyed the former Soviet Union.

In 2012, Jeff had a near date with death from meningitis, which he survived not least due to the care and attention of his companion at the time, Margaret. But he continued to suffer from many of the diseases that so disproportionately afflict black men in this racist society. Not long before he died, Jeff had one of his regular phone calls with former Spartacist League National Chairman Jim Robertson, who was among his closest friends. Jeff told Jim that he was doing well, reading a lot, pursuing his piano lessons, getting somewhat out and about and feeling that he had the financial capacity to survive. Thus, his comrades, family and friends can take some solace in that he died feeling relatively content with his life.

We hope that some of the current generation of black youth animated by the fight against cop terror might learn from Jeff's life and the process he went through to become a communist. Even after he was no longer a party member, Jeff remained part of our common movement for decades, and we always knew he would be there with us when the bugle blew.

The concluding words of Richard Wright's poem "I've Seen Black Hands" are a fitting tribute:

> "I am black and I have seen black hands
> Raised in fists of revolt, side by side with the white fists of white workers,
> And some day—and it is only this which sustains me—
> Some day there shall be millions and millions of them,
> On some red day in a burst of fists on a new horizon!"

WV Photo

San Francisco, 15 April 1984: Jeff speaking as Confederate flag burns after Spartacist supporters tore down banner of slavery and Klan terror at Civic Center.

Malcolm X: Courageous Fighter for Black Liberation

February 21 marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X at Harlem's Audubon Ballroom. We honor Malcolm for his intransigent fight for black freedom, which inspired young militants for years to come. Imprisoned as a petty street hustler in 1946, Malcolm converted to the Nation of Islam (NOI) behind bars and after his release in 1952 became its most visible and effective spokesman. The NOI under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad had been a small sect combining religious superstition and black separatism. It was Malcolm's eloquence in giving voice to the suffering black masses and his denunciations of the sellout liberal civil rights leaders that propelled the NOI into national prominence. He was also an anti-colonialist as he understood it, drawing inspiration from struggles against Western rule in Africa and Asia.

Despite its verbal militancy, the NOI stood aside from the struggle for civil rights. For Malcolm, who deeply believed its religious ideology, the NOI's abstention increasingly collided with his passionate commitment to fighting white supremacy, racial injustice and hypocrisy. Malcolm was suspended from speaking in public and then purged from the NOI after famously declaring that the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy was a case of the "chickens coming home to roost." Malcolm was relentlessly denounced by NOI leaders, including his former protégé, Louis X (today the reactionary demagogue Louis Farrakhan), who proclaimed Malcolm "worthy of death."

Following his break with the NOI, Malcolm lived barely a year before his murder. Much of this time was spent abroad, including a pilgrimage to Mecca. Although he founded two organizations in rapid succession—Muslim Mosque Inc. and the Organization of Afro-American Unity—they had no real program beyond the eclectic views expressed in his speeches. Our obituary of Malcolm, written by a founding member of the Spartacist tendency, noted:

> "When you heard Malcolm speak, even when you heard him say things that were wrong and confusing, you wanted to believe. Malcolm could move men deeply. He was the stuff of which mass leaders are made. Commencing his public life in the context of the apolitical, irrational religiosity and racial mysticism of the Muslim movement, his break toward politicalness and rationality was slow, painful, and terribly incomplete."

We reprint below excerpts of our article "Malcolm X: Courageous Fighter for Black Liberation," which first appeared in *Young Spartacus* Nos. 115 and 116 (February and March 1984) and was reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 2.

* * *

> "Malcolm was our manhood, our living black manhood! This was his meaning to his people. And, in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves...."
> —Ossie Davis, 27 February 1965

Nineteen years ago the most admired and respected, the most hated and feared black man of his generation was assassinated while speaking at Harlem's Audubon Ballroom. Lenin once observed that while a revolutionist is alive and fighting, the oppressor class persecutes him, hounds him, vilifies him, circulates the most vile slanders about him. But after he's dead sometimes an effort is made to co-opt his memory, to portray him as a well-meaning, if misguided, do-gooder. The same people who savagely attacked him when alive now mourn him as a "great loss to the movement." Something like this has happened to Malcolm X.

The white rulers of this country hated Malcolm X and responded with undisguised malicious glee to his violent death. The director of the official United States Information Agency, Carl Rowan (who is black) dismissed Malcolm X contemptuously as "an ex-convict, ex-dope peddler who became a racial fanatic." The obituary editorial in the liberal *New York Times* (22 February 1965) vilified him as "an extraordinary and twisted man, turning many true gifts to evil purpose":

> "...his ruthless and fanatical belief in violence not only set him apart from the responsible leaders of the civil rights movement and the overwhelming majority of Negroes. It also marked him for notoriety, and for a violent end."

In other words, they think he got what he deserved.

The "responsible" civil rights leaders, needless to say, fed into the ruling class hysteria against Malcolm and the Black Muslims. Martin Luther King declared their views "bordered on a new kind of race hatred and an unconscious advocacy of violence." Malcolm returned the compliment, denouncing King as a "twentieth-century Uncle Tom" whose "primary concern is defending the white man."

Now and for some time past, however, an effort has been made to identify Malcolm with the "respectable" black leaders whom he despised. One of the most despicable of the whole lot is Bayard Rustin, the kind of "socialist" who's apt to be funded by the CIA. In 1963 Rustin was chief organizer for the March on Washington, which Malcolm dubbed "the farce on Washington." Yet not long after Malcolm was killed Rustin claimed, "Malcolm was moving toward the mainstream of the civil rights movement when his life was cut short" (*Down the Line* [1970]). Corpses can't protest. Rustin's line has been taken up by other reformist fakers. At the rally last August 27 (actually a pray-in for the Democratic Party) to commemorate the 1963 March on Washington, Sam Marcy's Workers World Party carried a banner depicting King and Malcolm together. And Jack Barnes' Socialist Workers Party ran speeches by Malcolm and MLK in the *Militant*, but *not* Malcolm's scathing attack on the '63 March and King's rose-colored "dreams." Today the *name* of Malcolm X is being prostituted in the service of Democratic Party liberalism, which the *real* Malcolm X fought to the end with all the force of his extraordinary personality.

Bettmann

May 1963: Malcolm X addresses Harlem rally.

At a critical moment in contemporary American history Malcolm X was *the* voice of black militancy. His importance and appeal lay, in particular, in his intransigent opposition to the "white man's puppet Negro 'leaders'," as he called them. Martin Luther King told the world that black people loved the white oppressor and would answer the racists' bombings and beatings with Christian forgiveness. He hoped in this way to shame the Northern white liberal establishment into moving against Southern Jim Crow by demonstrating the moral superiority of black people to the KKK killers and their confederates like George Wallace and Bull Connor. The idea that blacks had to prove to the "good white massa" that they were peaceable folk and god-fearing Christians enraged Malcolm to the depths of his being. It was degrading. Like the sheep reminding the wolf when it's time for dinner. Malcolm X cut through the sanctimonious claptrap and foot-shuffling hypocrisy of the "respectable" black leaders like a sharp knife going through a tub of butter:

> "Just as Uncle Tom, back during slavery, used to keep Negroes from resisting the bloodhound or resisting the Ku Klux Klan by teaching them to love their enemies or pray for those who use them spitefully, today Martin Luther King is just a twentieth-century or modern Uncle Tom, or religious Uncle Tom, who is doing the same thing today to keep Negroes defenseless....
> "...but the masses of black people today don't go for what Martin Luther King is putting down."
> —Interview in Louis E. Lomax, *When the Word Is Given...* (1963)

Within months after Malcolm spoke these words, Harlem erupted in the first of a series of ghetto explosions which shook white racist America.

Malcolm X was the voice of that angry black ghetto. He spoke for the desperate and angry ghetto masses because he had been one of them. When he spoke of the hell the white oppressor had made for black people in America, of the torments—psychological as well as material—they suffered every day, he had been there....

American Workers Revolution Needs Black Leadership

Here we come to the heart of Malcolm X's political weakness, after as well as before he split from the Muslims: his failure to recognize *class struggle* as the progressive motor force of history. Malcolm is often spoken of as a genuine representative of the black masses. This is only partially true. The social world of the unionized black auto worker, steel worker or docker, who recognized common interests and had engaged in common struggles with their white class brothers, was alien to Malcolm's experience and knowledge. He had been a ghetto hustler, then a convict, and then the minister of a separatist religious sect. For Malcolm, the fundamental and overriding division in American society was black and white, not workers and capitalists. He consistently emphasized that blacks in America were outnumbered ten to one. That's why he sought his main allies outside of American society.

True, in the last period of his life he came to recognize there were genuinely anti-racist whites and he welcomed their efforts. But such whites that he encountered were predominantly liberal or radical student-youth, often motivated by guilt over their privileged social position. Clearly reflecting his experiences with these white students (almost all of his speeches to white audiences were on campuses), he viewed overcoming racism among whites primarily in terms of individual enlightenment, not social struggle. Thus, in one of his last interviews (18 January 1965) he stated:

> "If the entire American population were properly educated—by properly educated, I mean given a true picture of the history and contributions of the black man—I think many whites would be less racist in their feelings."
> —*By Any Means Necessary*

The struggle against racism in this society is not basically one of proper education but of class conflict. Or rather the proper education comes through class conflict. The labor movement stands as the one racially integrated and powerful force in this society. It is the strategic weight of black workers in the labor movement which gives them the potential leverage to topple the entire racist, capitalist system. Black workers, armed with a revolutionary socialist program and organized by a communist vanguard party, *can lead* backward, even racist white workers in battles against the ruling class.

No one expressed the anger and the anguish of the oppressed black masses better than Malcolm X. As revolutionary socialists committed to the fight for black freedom, to finishing the Civil War once and for all through a third American revolution, we solidarize with Malcolm's stand against the sick racism and racists permeating this society. He was the man who told it like it is: that this system is maintained by and enforces the brutal oppression of 20 million black people, that its so-called democracy is a lie, that the politicians of both parties are con men and enemies of black freedom. His refusal to play the liberals' game, to beg for a little, hat-in-hand and his demand for freedom *now* inspired a generation of black militants. His call upon black America to stand up to the racist powers-that-be and his scathing denunciation of the strategy

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WV Photo

Malcolm X's memory is honored by participant at Spartacist-initiated labor/black anti-Klan mobilization in Washington, D.C., 27 November 1982.

Young Spartacus

From Los Angeles to Amherst

Zionist Smear Campaign Targets Pro-Palestinian Students

On February 22, vile posters appeared at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) showing two gunmen standing over a hooded prisoner. The posters were labeled with the name Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and the hashtag "#JewHaters." Similar posters have been put up at campuses around the nation, from the University of Virginia to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst—the work of arch-reactionary provocateur David Horowitz, who has launched a "Jew Hatred on Campus" campaign. The purpose of this campaign, which targets at least 50 schools, is to slander pro-Palestinian groups such as the SJP as somehow supporting or "associated with known terrorist organizations" and furthermore to pressure university administrations to "withdraw campus privileges and university support from them."

Horowitz, a one-time New Left activist turned rabid conservative hack, has a long track record of seeking to squelch leftist speech. His 2006 book, *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*, amounted to a call for witchhunts and purges of the academy across disciplines as varied as African American studies, law, journalism, and international relations. In 2001, he made a splash by placing advertisements in campus newspapers arguing that black people should be thankful for slavery, then turning on those who condemned his grotesque racism as opponents of "free speech" (see "Racism and Witchhunts On Campus," *WV* No. 756, 13 April 2001). His current push is well-timed to intersect the climate of "anti-terror" hysteria the U.S. ruling class has been whipping up to foment support for imperialist atrocities and the further trampling of civil liberties.

To protest Horowitz's vicious campaign, Spartacist supporters attended a February 24 meeting at UCLA co-sponsored by the SJP and Jewish Voice for Peace that had been called to promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. Throughout the UC system, SJP groups have been lobbying the UC Regents to adopt such measures by divesting from "companies engaged in the violation of Palestinian rights." (See "'Boycott Israel' Campaign and Illusions in Democratic Imperialism," *WV* No. 1045, 2 May 2014).

Solidarizing with the SJP against the Zionist slurs, an SL spokesman said that the posters were "meant to isolate defenders of the Palestinian people, to associate them with terrorism and set them up" for vigilante attacks as well as government repression. We likewise stand for the defense of the oppressed Palestinian people from Israeli state terror. With regard to BDS, our spokesman explained that Marxists oppose the BDS campaign because it sees bloody U.S. imperialism as a lever for pushing Israel into respecting the Palestinians' right to national self-determination. The speaker added that Washington will support Israel as long as it serves the strategic interests of U.S. imperialism, regardless of "how many Palestinians are killed, how much of their land is stolen, how many are detained at checkpoints."

The SJP has called on the UCLA administration and cops to "launch an investigation concerning the creation and distribution of the flyers" and asked the administration to make a statement "condemning the targeting of a student organization with hatespeech." The representative of the capitalist class on campus, the administration has amply demonstrated its attitude toward pro-Palestinian activists. Three years ago, for example, the UC Irvine administration colluded with the Orange County district attorney to prosecute 11 Muslim students for interrupting a speech by war criminal Michael Oren, then Israeli ambassador to the U.S. (see "Overturn the Convictions of the Irvine 11!" *WV* No. 995, 3 February 2012). We warn that any appeals to the administration to ban "hate speech" or otherwise police political expression will only empower it in the future to turn on leftists and any perceived opponents of the capitalist status quo.

In contrast to liberal pleas to agents of the class enemy, the SYC stands for mobilizing students, faculty and campus workers to meet Horowitz's provocations with protest and exposure. When he emerged from his rat hole in 2001 to make an appearance at UC Berkeley as part of a nationwide speaking tour to detestably prettify America's history of black

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Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary internationalist program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of black people, women and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in socialist revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.

What We Fight For

1 Mobilize students behind the social power of the multiracial working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Unionize the South! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the bosses' government and courts out of the unions!

2 Black oppression is the bedrock of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! For mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists and race-terrorists! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense! No reliance on the capitalist courts or politicians! Fascist terror is not a question of "free speech." Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

3 For free, quality, integrated public education for all! Nationalize the private universities! Down with the racist purge of higher education—defend affirmative action, no to tuition hikes! No to budget cuts! For an end to tracking! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Down with police occupation of public schools! Cops off campus!

4 For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For mass, labor-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! For free, quality health care for all! Equal pay for equal work! Down with anti-gay laws! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against consensual activities, called "crimes without victims," like pornography, gambling, drug use, prostitution and "statutory rape"!

5 Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize foreign-born workers into the unions! No deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Arab, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry!

6 Down with the "war on terror," which is a war aimed at immigrants, labor, the left and minorities! Free all the detainees! Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! For labor mobilizations against racist cop terror! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against black and Hispanic youth! The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution!

7 Defend separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Keep religion out of the schools! No prayer in the schools! Down with the teaching of creationism! For the teaching of evolution! No government funding for religious, private or "charter" schools!

8 Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq, Afghanistan now! Down with the neocolonial occupations! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! No illusions in the UN—a den of imperialist thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, Haiti! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean! U.S. imperialist butchers: hands off the world! No to the draft! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! Drive ROTC, CIA and police recruiters off the campuses!

9 For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! Workers of the world, unite! For unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Cuba, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism!

10 Break with the racist, warmongering Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism! No support to any capitalist parties, including Greens! For a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

15 May 2011

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the revolutionary Marxist Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.

Race, Sex and Class in Capitalist America

Meet in front of the
Ethnic Studies Building
San Francisco State University

For more information:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY

Monday, March 23, 7 p.m.

Women's Oppression and the Struggle for Revolution

CCNY, NAC Room 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)

Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.

Marxism vs. Feminism: What Way Forward for Women's Liberation?

University of British Columbia
Irving Barber Learning Centre
Room 315

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

TORONTO

Thursday, March 19, 6:30 p.m.

Marxism vs. Feminism: Which Way Forward for Women's Liberation?

OISE, Room 2199, 252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)

In case of a strike on campus, class will be held off-campus. Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!

Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

Visit the ICL website: **www.icl-fi.org**

Civil Rights...

(continued from page 12)

about an economic recovery, the workers and blacks sure haven't seen it. A *New York Times* article (14 December) titled "A Growing Economic Recovery Bypasses Low-Wage Workers and Their Tables" comments mildly: "The newest federal statistics on hunger show that one in six people in this city, or about 1.4 million people, could not afford a consistent, adequate supply of food throughout the year during the three-year period from 2011 through 2013, a time of economic recovery." It goes on: "Meanwhile, food pantries and soup kitchens are reporting increased demand this year from low-wage workers" as well as from "the jobless, the elderly, the homeless." Great! A recovery where one out of six go hungry part of the time and where workers for major employers like Walmart have to go on food stamps. Walmart is now touting a raise for its workers to a paltry $9 an hour.

Black people, who have the lowest incomes and are forcibly segregated at the bottom of this society, are hit the hardest. Another *New York Times* article (12 December) notes: "The wealth gap between minorities and whites has continued to increase in the midst of the economic recovery." The median net worth of a white household was ten times higher than that of a black household in 2007, and in 2013 it was 13 times higher. Housing in this country remains segregated and, with school busing all but gone, American public education is more segregated than at any time since the civil rights movement. Researchers have coined the term "apartheid schools" to describe schools with 1 percent or less white student enrollment, and there are a lot of them.

Michael Brown's mother wept when she described how hard she worked to get her son through high school. As an article by Nikole Hannah-Jones in the *New York Times* (19 December) commented: "If Michael Brown's educational experience was a success story, it was a damning one." The school district he attended is among the poorest and most segregated in Missouri. Half of black male students from his high school never graduate, and only one in four of those who actually do graduate make it to a four-year college. In fact, by the time Michael Brown graduated, the district had lost its state accreditation.

Just down the road lies Clayton, the wealthy county seat where a grand jury unsurprisingly decided not to indict the cop who killed Michael Brown. In the predominantly white public schools there, with computers, new books, gyms and things that schools should have, the graduation rate is 96 percent, with 84 percent continuing to four-year colleges. As the Hannah-Jones article says: "A network of school district boundaries has, to this day, divided students in racially separate schools as effectively as any Jim Crow law. Michael Brown's education was not exceptional, then, but all too typical, and it illustrates the vast disparity in resources and expectations for black children in America's segregated school systems." Even the *New York Times* speaks some of the truth some of the time.

These prison-like schools do little except to funnel young black men into the actual prison system. Incarceration has been on a scale never before seen in American history. Roughly 2.3 million are behind bars, with black men locked up at the highest rate by far. Many are victims of the decades-long, bipartisan "war on drugs," pushed not only by Republican reactionaries but also early on by Democratic Party hustlers like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton.

A popular protest slogan has been "black lives matter." But they don't matter to the racist rulers of this class-divided society. In light of the deindustrialization of much of the country, many black youth are treated as an expendable surplus population. At the same time, there are still significant numbers of black workers in strategic industries. These workers will be instrumental in any fight to put an end to this racist capitalist hell through socialist revolution.

Beltmann

Martin Luther King and UAW head Walter Reuther (second from right) among others meet with President Kennedy in White House on day of March on Washington, 28 August 1963.

The power of the working class is derived from its central role in production. By withholding their labor, workers can cut off the flow of profits, the capitalists' lifeblood. A mobilization of workers' power against racist cop terror could put a damper on police repression. But that means mobilizing the social power of the multiracial working class independent from and in opposition to the capitalist state and its political parties—Republican, Democrat and Green.

The notion of workers collectively engaging in hard-fought struggle in their own interests, much less in the interests of the black masses, may sound pretty far out to today's youth. But it is the only answer. When times change and social and class struggle heats up, the working class can, through the work of a revolutionary vanguard party, become imbued with the consciousness of its historic interest as a class fighting for itself and for all of the oppressed.

Marxist Fight Against Black Oppression

I want to talk a bit more historically about the American black question. Our starting point is Marx. There's endless garbage out there from black nationalists and academics about how Marxism is "Eurocentric" or how "Marx was a racist." Nothing could be further from the truth.

You cannot understand the black question in a Marxist or materialist sense without understanding, as it was called, the "peculiar institution" of slavery, and the bloody Civil War that ended it. One is struck by Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' astonishing knowledge of American history in their Civil War writings—as well as by their active anti-slavery organizing in Britain. They saw the Civil War as one of the century's major battles, a social overturn and a harbinger of socialist revolutions to come.

In slavery we see the origins of the material basis for the oppression of black people as a race-color caste, which still defines them today. The unscientific category of "race" and the racist myth of black inferiority were necessary props to the institution of slavery in the U.S. These racist myths continue to be necessary props to American capitalism, part of the divide-and-rule strategy that the bourgeoisie uses to keep the working class down. We must also fight the anti-immigrant chauvinism that is used to turn white and black workers against their immigrant brothers and sisters.

The Civil War, in which 200,000 black troops were crucial to turning the tide, was a revolutionary struggle that smashed the rule of the slaveholders. After the war, the Northern capitalists soon allied with the Southern propertied classes against the aspirations of the black freedmen. The promise of "40 acres and a mule" was scrapped and political power in the Southern states was restored to the former slavocracy, though slavery could not be restored. It is worth contemplating how it took a Civil War, a second American revolution, to end chattel slavery, to get the slaveholders to hand over "their property." Who could seriously think that today's capitalists can be persuaded to hand over the factories, banks, mines and mills without a struggle? That will take a third American revolution, a proletarian socialist revolution.

James P. Cannon, the founding leader of American Trotskyism, described the crucial intervention of Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International in the 1920s in driving home the centrality of the fight for black freedom to proletarian revolution in the U.S. As even the best of the American socialists had been pretty clueless on the question, Cannon said: "Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution." The Comintern's abandonment of its original revolutionary program under the influence of Stalinism eventually led to disorientation and worse for the American CP on the black question, as it did on all other issues.

Crucially, it was the work of veteran Trotskyist Richard Fraser in the 1940s and '50s that deepened the Marxist understanding of the black question. Fraser, in the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP), began from the premise that black people, who he described as "the most completely 'Americanized' section of the population," were not an oppressed nation or a nationality in any sense. Therefore, self-determination, or separation in an independent nation, for American blacks did not make sense. Fraser wrote, speaking of the black masses: "The goals which history has dictated to them are to achieve complete equality through the elimination of racial segregation, discrimination, and prejudice. That is, the overthrow of the race system." He went on to say: "These goals cannot be accomplished except through the socialist revolution" ("For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Struggle" [1955], reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised], September 1978).

From the formation of our tendency, which originated in the early 1960s as a left opposition inside the SWP, we described the black population in the U.S. as an oppressed race-color caste. We have always stood for the perspective of revolutionary integrationism, the fight for the assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist society. Reflecting how the struggle for black freedom is a strategic question of the American revolution, we said in an early document:

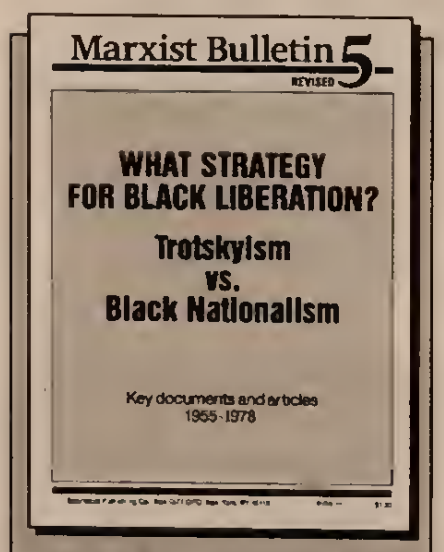
> "Any organization which claims a revolutionary perspective for the United States must confront the *special oppression* of black people—the forced segregation of blacks at the bottom of capitalist society and the poisonous racism which divides the working class and cripples its struggles. There will be no social revolution in this country without the united struggle of black and white workers led by their multiracial vanguard party. Moreover, there is no other road to eliminating the special oppression of black people than the victorious conquest of power by the U.S. proletariat."
>
> —Preface, *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised)

We reject the various forms of black nationalism. And we reject the anti-Marxist conception of "white skin privilege" that has started to pop up again with greater frequency. This theory claims that white workers and bosses are supposedly united in "privilege." No! Some sections of the white working class do buy into the racism that is fomented by the exploiters. But they have no material stake in the perpetuation of this incredibly unequal society, whose white ruling class enjoys unparalleled riches coming at workers' expense. Look at the American South, where conditions are worse for white working people as well as blacks—few unions and low wages. White, black and Latino workers have a common interest in overthrowing capitalism, but you have to fight to bring this consciousness to the working class.

Organizing Black Workers in the South

Let me talk about the civil rights movement. Why is it that petty-bourgeois preachers like Martin Luther King and his group the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) came to the fore in the Southern civil rights struggles? Was the church so progressive? Was it the only institution that Southern blacks respected? Cornel West and his ilk would probably answer "yes" to both questions, and go on to talk about King as a "revolutionary Christian"—which seems like an oxymoron to me.

The truth is that civil rights struggles didn't start with King or the 1954 Supreme Court decision banning school segregation (now mostly a dead letter). They were sparked in the early 1940s



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Malcolm X...

(continued from page 4)

of nonviolence earned him the enmity of the rulers and their kept "respectable" black leaders. But for us who see the fight for black liberation as strategic to a workers revolution against the whole hideous and irrational profit system, it is precisely his intransigent penchant for the truth and his uncompromising opposition to racist America that makes Malcolm X a hero. But he did not understand the potential *power* of American blacks as workers to liberate not only themselves but oppressed peoples throughout the world. What is needed to release and direct that power is the construction of a racially integrated communist vanguard. Shortly after Malcolm was killed we wrote:

> "...such a leadership will eventually be forthcoming. This is a statistical as well as a social certainty. This leadership, building on the experience of others such as Malcolm, and emancipated from his religiosity, will build a movement in which the black masses and their allies can lead the third great American revolution. Then Malcolm X will be remembered by black and white alike as a heroic and tragic figure in a dark period of our common history."
>
> —*Spartacist* No. 4, May-June 1965 ■

when the social structure of black America, North and South, took on an increasingly urban, proletarian character. The creation of a Southern black proletariat fundamentally eroded the Jim Crow system of segregation, a system based on police/Klan terror aimed at atomized rural sharecroppers. A bunch of hooded Klansmen riding through rural Mississippi was one thing, but in all-black areas of Birmingham they were more likely to get their butts kicked.

Union organizing brought the black proletariat together in a setting where they had some social power. There is a fascinating article that comrades have recommended to me over the years called "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement" (1988) by Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein. It details organizing efforts by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) at the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in the early '40s. Union organizing was also going on in the Southern cities of Memphis, Richmond, Charleston and Louisville.

At the R.J. Reynolds processing plant, blacks formed the majority of the workforce, although, of course, whites had the better-paying, easier jobs. Earlier, the American Federation of Labor had tried to organize the plant, but their plan for setting up two segregated locals hadn't gone over too well with black workers. The CIO, which came in with "several young black organizers," targeted black workers and "championed black dignity and self-organization" while supporting an industrial union for all.

Eventually becoming the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers Local 22, this union, not surprisingly for the time, was led by the Communist Party. Also not surprisingly, the black ministers and the black petty bourgeoisie came out hard against the union, writing letters to the bourgeois press urging workers to reject it. This Booker T. Washington-style accommodationism was typical for preachers, who are beholden to the capitalists and landlords. But black workers responded with indignation. One, noting that he attended church for 30 years, wrote angrily: "Now that the laboring class of people are about to unite and cooperate on wholesale scale for the purpose of collective bargaining, these same leaders seem to disagree with that which they have taught their people." A group of union members asserted: "We feel we are the leaders instead of you." Indeed!

Interestingly, as a side note, the 2014 documentary *Spies of Mississippi* shows how some blacks were used by the state government to infiltrate and spy on the civil rights movement, and they were not the most downtrodden. They were part of the black petty bourgeoisie—including a well-known black preacher and the editor

WV Photo

New York City, December 2014: Spartacist contingent at thousands-strong march against racist cop terror.

of a black newspaper—who felt that the struggle for integration would cost them their position in the black community.

Going back to Local 22, the union was organized and the CP recruited. They had a lively union hall with a softball team, checkers tournaments and a library with books by Herbert Aptheker, W.E.B. DuBois and Frederick Douglass. (Obviously CP-dominated.) The union engaged in political agitation against segregation and conducted voter registration drives alongside other CIO unions organizing anti-poll tax and anti-lynching campaigns in the South.

But this union movement was soon channeled by the CP into the Democratic Party. This was a continuation of the CP's sellout perspective of tailing "progressive" capitalist politicians. In the mid 1930s, the CP along with the rest of the CIO leadership had joined Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition. In the South, such a perspective meant trying to reform a racist police state by supporting the ruling Democratic Party dominated by Dixiecrats.

In the late 1940s, the government launched a massive anti-Communist witchhunt to smash the militancy of the industrial unions that had been organized in the 1930s and early '40s. The Taft-Hartley Act barred Communists from holding union office and banned a whole host of militant strike tactics. The CIO opposed Taft-Hartley in the abstract, but adhered to it in practice. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the United Electrical Workers and nine other CP-led unions with around one million members, almost 20 percent of the entire CIO membership, were expelled from the CIO. A key figure in these red purges was Walter Reuther, head of the United Auto Workers (UAW) and later head of the CIO.

These witchhunts wrecked working-class civil rights activity in the South. Media redbaiting, police attacks and CIO raiding, combined with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), destroyed Local 22. It was the same story in Alabama with the CP-led Mine, Mill and Smelter Union. (The struggles of that union in New Mexico were the subject of the 1954 movie, *Salt of the Earth*.)

Ironically, the destruction of integrated union power took place against the backdrop of "Operation Dixie," the official CIO campaign to organize the South (the name tells you enough). Predictably, as an organizing drive that avoided taking on the race question and excluded all left-wingers, it failed. Referring to this failure as "one of the great tragedies for American labor," Michael Goldfield acerbically comments in his book *The Color of Politics* (1997): "The bureaucratism and obtuseness to the importance of solidarity and worker militancy, especially to questions of race, led the CIO right into a completely self-defeating strategy." Class collaboration was the name of the game for the CIO bureaucrats.

By the late 1950s and '60s, Birmingham and other places in Alabama would be at the center of the civil rights movement. Yet, the militant integrated unions that could have mobilized the social power of the working class at the head of that movement had mostly ceased to exist. The International Longshoremen's Association, which was still a union bastion in the mostly non-union South, had segregated locals.

The Korstad and Lichtenstein article states: "Local 22 disappeared from Winston-Salem political and economic life, and a far more accommodative black community leadership filled the void left by the union's defeat." Perhaps the authors wouldn't agree, but that accommodative leadership was Martin Luther King and the preachers who became the backbone of the gradualist, pro-Democratic Party civil rights establishment.

Let me comment that the erstwhile social-democrat Walter Reuther, having purged the reds from the UAW and smashed any attempt to mobilize against black oppression in Detroit, became a big supporter of Martin Luther King. That's not a contradiction. Like many anti-Communists, Reuther supported the liberal civil rights agenda as a way to undercut the political influence of communists. He could easily support Martin Luther King's pacifist liberalism in the South, and not have to deal in the slightest with racist practices in the Detroit auto plants or within the UAW itself.

Early Civil Rights Struggles

In 1965, I went down to Mississippi. While I wasn't in the SL then, by the time I returned I would have agreed 100 percent with what the SL wrote that same year:

> "From the beginning the black voter registration campaign in the South was an assertion of potential independence—directed against the underlying social system as well as the segregationist political apparatus which helps maintain it. Revolutionary in implication because it involved organizing masses of black workers and share-croppers in struggle, the mass character of the movement poses a dangerous threat to the American ruling class and its politicians. Hence they use every means at their disposal to derail the movement—including sending in such kept leaders as Martin Luther King—to head it off and deliver it to the Democratic Party where the job of beheading and neutralizing it can be finished off."
>
> —"Conspiracy and Treachery in Alabama," *Spartacist* No. 4, May-June 1965

Today, we hear a lot of discussion about "reclaiming" King's "radical legacy." But, no, "kept leader" is about right.

Martin Luther King came to the fore during the Montgomery bus boycott. New in town and not originally in the leadership, he was pushed forward as a more "educated" and respectable spokesman. As a preacher, he had no real job to lose. Under the influence of anti-communist social-democrats like Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King proselytized for pacifism and nonviolence.

There is a funny story. Early on, Rustin visited Martin Luther King's house and saw armed guards at the door and guns lying around, surely in response to threats against him. But Rustin had a fit. Rustin was also influential in helping King and others set up the SCLC. Emphasizing the "Christian" in its name, its strategy of pacifist "direct action" was captured in King's famous statement: "We will soon wear you down by pure capacity to suffer."

As a moral philosophy, this is disgusting. But the real point is it was a political strategy. It was a way of keeping the movement respectable, appealing to the consciences of those in power. King and the SCLC looked to the Northern liberals of the Democratic Party and the federal government to come to the aid of black people.

After the long bus boycott, the buses were integrated in Montgomery and King was riding high on his pacifism and "soul force." But blacks in Montgomery were left to face the racist backlash. The KKK came out of their holes, black churches were bombed and King's house was dynamited. Rosa Parks was blacklisted and hounded out of Montgomery, eventually forced to move to Detroit. King told angry blacks, even those rising to his defense, to cool it.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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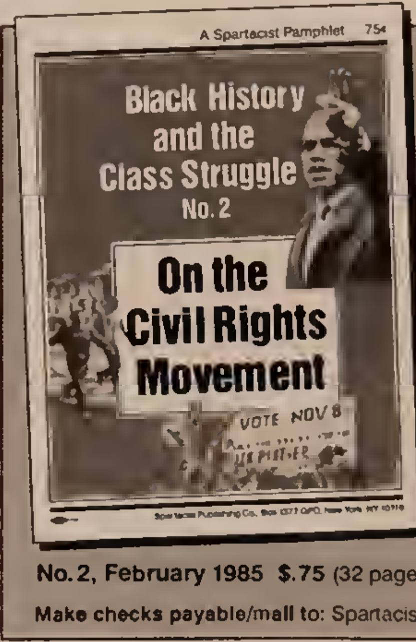

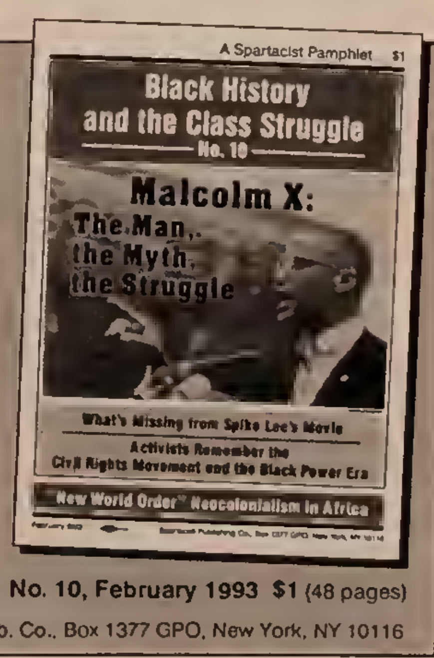

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The Rise of British Imperialism

Part Two
Capitalism and Slavery

In a preface to *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), V. I. Lenin described how imperialism is "a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries." Lenin emphasized that in this period marked by the dominance of finance capital the imperialist powers are impelled to carve up the rest of the globe in a race for new markets, raw materials and cheap labor. The scramble to leech the greatest profits possible through the exploitation of working people is the root cause of wars of imperialist plunder and of the miserable conditions under which the overwhelming mass of the world's population lives and dies. The only way out for the exploited and the oppressed is through socialist revolutions that expropriate the bourgeoisie's productive property and establish an internationally planned socialist economy.

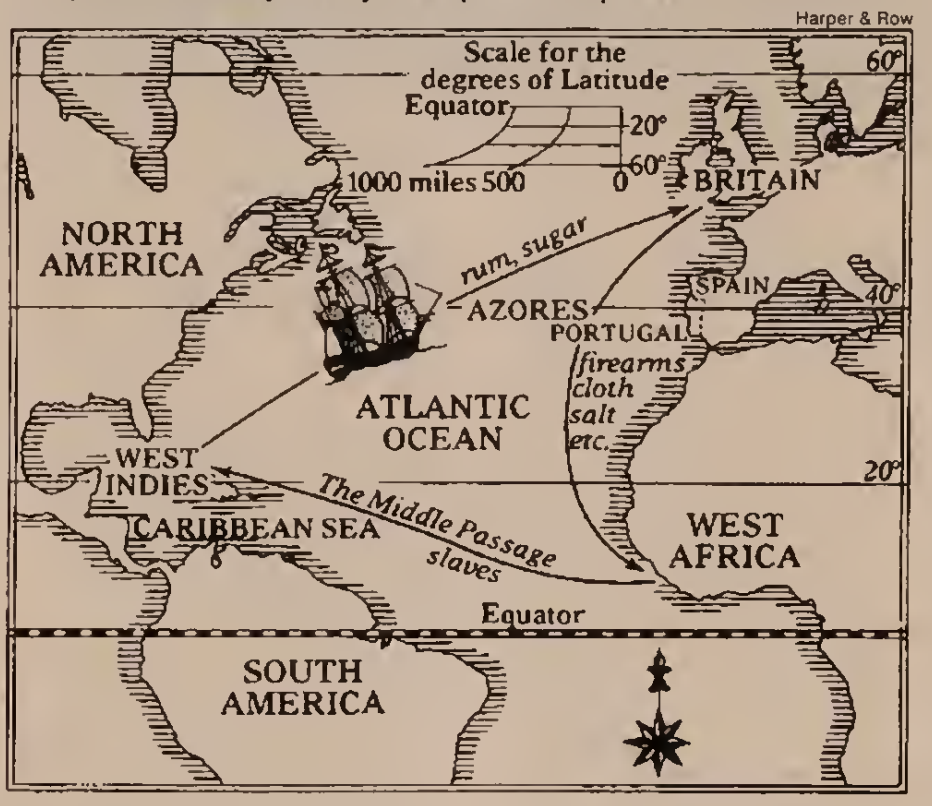
We reprint below Part Two of a presentation, delivered at the Troskyist League of Canada/Ligue Trotskyste du Canada Thirteenth National Conference in Summer 2013, by comrade Russell Stoker on the developments that made Britain the first modern imperialist power. The edited version of the talk was first printed as a two-part article in *Spartacist Canada* Nos. 182 and 183 (Fall 2014 and Winter 2014/15). Part One, which appeared in *WV* No. 1062 (20 February), covered the Protestant Reformation and 1642-51 English Civil War; the second part addresses the connection between the Industrial Revolution and the slave trade.

In the U.S., as in Britain, early capital accumulation was made possible by the New World's slave-based agricultural economy. The competing expansionist appetites of the Northern capitalists and the Southern plantation owners eventually reached a breaking point, culminating in the 1861-65 American Civil War. That war, the last of the great bourgeois revolutions, smashed the slavocracy in the U.S. South but did not end the deep-seated oppression of the black masses, which today remains a central feature of this class-divided society. By the turn of the 20th century, U.S. capitalism had entered onto the imperialist stage, and with its ascendancy a long trail of savageries and depredations the world over has followed ever since.

* * *

Corbis

Above: Depiction of slave ship being loaded off coast of West Africa. Below: Triangle Trade was key to early development of capitalism.



SPARTACIST CANADA 4

Eric Williams' book *Capitalism and Slavery* was a shocker when he wrote it in 1944 and is still controversial today. He ripped the self-righteous mask from the apologists for the British ruling class who claimed the moral high ground and who tut-tutted American slavery because the British had passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act as early as 1807. Williams' premise is that the profits of the British slave trade financed the Industrial Revolution. Even today, many respectable British academics damn Williams with faint praise, denying the fundamental role of the British slave trade in the development of British capitalism.

It's entirely accurate to say that the blood and sweat of African slaves were both fuel and lubricant for the Industrial Revolution. Neither the early spice trade with India nor the lucrative extortion of wealth by the land pirates of the East India Company stimulated manufacture in Britain to any great extent. But for Liverpool and Lancashire in England's northwest, the slave trade was quite a different story.

Liverpool was a sleepy fishing port at the mouth of the River Mersey for 500 years before it was declared a parish in 1699, the year the first slave ship departed from that village. Well, that was a roaring success. The town merchants could see the writing on the wall and the coins falling into their pockets. A few of the more farsighted pooled their capital and in 1715 they built their first wet dock, where ships could be rapidly loaded and unloaded, tied alongside the dock at a constant water level regardless of tides. Otherwise, rowboats were required to ferry goods back and forth while the ship lay at anchor in the river current. That was nearly 100 years before London had such advantages.

Liverpool dominated the trade because it had geographic advantages, especially during wartime, which was most of the time. The port was much farther north and away from the French and Spanish privateers. The Mersey provided cheap transportation from the Lancashire textile mills just inland. It was a natural fit.

Shortly after the wet docks were completed, four or five slave ships were setting out from Liverpool each year. I should mention that these slave ships and their voyages were financed by shareholders. Everyone got in on the action. Even the sons of carpenters and sailmakers found the means to invest and become slave merchants themselves, as did many slave ship captains.

By the mid 18th century, the port was launching some 24 slave ships per year, and thereafter Liverpool went to the head of the class in the British slave trade. Of the 8,000-plus British ships that were purpose-built for the slave trade, over 2,100 were made in Liverpool itself and almost all of those were built after 1750. That works out to one complete ship every ten days.

All those ships required skilled workers to build and outfit them. They required vast quantities of Baltic timber, iron, sails, blocks and tackle and miles of hemp rope, not to mention capital to finance them. The canal-building craze was directly stimulated to cut transportation costs and increase production for both the slave trade and exports to the planter colonies. The manufacture of small arms, gunpowder, chains and shackles boomed. And all those workers needed housing and food.

The shipyards alone represented a vigorous economic undertaking, and they produced a large and growing population and a profitable market for regional agriculture as well. And that is just the ships that were built in Liverpool. Britain dispatched about 10,000 voyages to Africa for slaves, half of them out of Liverpool. Six wet docks were constructed at a cost in excess of one million pounds. Then for ship maintenance there were the dry docks, where the water could be completely drained out.

And none of those 5,000 ships departed empty. Manchester, like Liverpool, was at the very heart of the slave trade. Most of the woven goods pouring out of Manchester factories filled their holds and went to Africa in trade for slaves...or out to the colonies to clothe them. Nor did any ship return empty. They brought back raw sugar for distilleries, molasses, rum, tobacco and later, vast quantities of cotton. All this was part of the slave economy. Lloyds of London, the world's oldest and largest insurance market, reaped enormous wealth from the Atlantic slave trade.

Sugar Colonies and the Planter Parliament

The Liverpool merchants and Manchester mill owners were just raking in the money and falling over themselves to improve production. But that was chump change to the sugar planters who were already rich as Rockefellers and twice as fat. The sugar plantations were gigantic hellish machines which ground up human lives and sugar cane and squeezed out vast fortunes for the slave owners.

Before they seized upon African slaves, the planters had pressed indentured servants into the fields—mostly poor people, many Irish—and there were kidnappings and corrupt judges who served as press gangs for the planters. But try as they might, the legions of defeated Irish rebels or scrawny souls plucked from the English prisons or off the damp London streets mostly died in their tropical servitude—from beatings, from malaria, or from all manner of ailments and mistreatment.

The planters tried enslaving the native populations as well, but the latter were too few in numbers and failed to perform for their masters. The healthy populations ripped out of Africa proved to be just the forced labour the planters were looking for, and they seized upon them with a vengeance.

It is hard to overstate the wealth the slave sugar generated. Many planters moved their persons back to England at the earliest opportunity and ruled in glorious absentia. Once home, they settled into fine country estates or magnificent town homes. With their great wealth, many bought seats in parliament to protect their interests. The planters' grip on parliament would have made Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall jealous.

The Slave Trade and Scotland

Glasgow became a major trading port in the 18th century. Not unlike Liverpool, the city was bursting with industry and wealth generated by the slave economy. Sugar refining was the first industrial boon in Glasgow. Before the 1707 Act of Union, which merged Scotland and England to form the United Kingdom, direct trade with the colonies was prohibited, and Glasgow was forced to import sugar from Bristol and to engage in no small amount of smuggling.

Meanwhile, the Scottish merchants were pickled with envy over the booming English trade and decided: "Man! I have got to get me some of this!" They pooled all their ready cash, something like half of the total Scottish capital. Then they outfitted some ships, and in 1698 sailed across the Atlantic to set up a colony of their own in Panama. This was the "Darien Scheme," which comes down to us as the "Darien Disaster."

When the English found out, they were having none of it—right shirty [angry] they were—and forbade assistance or trade with the Scottish colonists, who were by now starving and otherwise having a very bad day. Actually, a couple thousand out of the 2,500 colonists perished, for which no tears were shed by the indigenous people I am sure.

Well, things went downhill from there. The English were able to leverage a hostile takeover of Scotland with a big plump bag of cash and the juicy news that Scottish merchants could take part in the lucrative slave trade if Scotland joined in. That was the glorious Act of Union.

The ink was hardly dry before Scottish merchants owned nearly a third of the slaves in the sugar colony of Jamaica, which England had snatched from under

Spain's nose some 50 years previous. Post-1707, Glasgow rapidly came to specialize in the tobacco trade and the wealth associated with that trade washed over the city and along the River Clyde.

As in England, the rapid rise of the wealthy bourgeoisie coincided with the relative decline of the landed gentry and the old society, particularly following the bloody destruction of the Stuart-loyalist Jacobite clans at Culloden Moor in 1746. Amidst the new wealth, scholars and intellectuals began to meet freely to discuss radical new ideas in the taverns and public houses of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. A well-luhricated intelligentsia began to take form, you might say.

The fierce Calvinism of John Knox, which was needed to topple the tyrants, had given way to the enlightened liberals asserting the fundamental importance of human reason and empiricism, which were more useful tenets for capitalist development. The intelligentsia sported a new and optimistic belief that man could improve society and conquer nature with scientific discovery through experimentation. The great advances in Scottish science and engineering in the next century were the fruits of this process.

By the early 18th century, Scotland had become the first literate society in Europe. While Britain was besting the French all over the world during the Seven Years War, in Edinburgh, with a population of 60,000, there were six publishing houses and papermaking was an important part of the economy. An official suryey in 1795 showed that out of a population of 1.5 million, 20,000 depended on writing and puhlishing and another 10,500 on teaching.

American Independence and the End of the Sugar Monopoly

Because of sugar, Jamaica was, bar none, the most valuable British colony anywhere. Yes, even including India and the spice trade. The wee American colonies existed to provide foodstuffs and such for the sugar colonies—primarily Jamaica and Barbados—where every inch of arable land was taken up with sugar cane. But Britain's sugar monopoly had already been broken on the European continent and in America, where smuggling cheap sugar for the rum distilleries to avoid crown taxes was a significant and growing part of the colonial economy.

America's War of Independence against Britain was waged from 1775 to 1783 by an alliance with a built-in contradiction. Two different classes, the Northern manufacturers and the Southern slave owners, joined forces because both economies suffered under the strictures imposed by the British mercantile system. This system was a closed monopoly in which British manufactures had command of a protected market and the sugar planters controlled the flow and price of sugar. American independence finally shattered British mercantilism.

Much blood and ink was spilled by the British rulers, who feared both the catastrophic destruction of the regulated trade and the loss of tax revenue from the colonies. The lords and planters ran point on this. The industry-based capitalists were not especially animated by opposition to mercantilism or slavery so long as they were making tons of money manufacturing goods necessary to the slave trade and the colonies. When the industrialists discovered later, to their great surprise, that far higher profits could be made outside of the mercantile system, only then did the tide begin to turn in favour of "free trade."

In Britain, the landed gentry had been natural allies of the sugar planters. For decades the government was dominated by the fabulously wealthy planters, who planted their seats in parliament whenever the fancy struck them. Parenthetically, that relationship was markedly different in France, where the king didn't lose his head until nearly 150 years after the English one did. The French monarchy distrusted its planter nohility and instead formed an alliance with what West Indian intellectual C.L.R. James called the "small whites," the petty bourgeoisie, in his seminal book *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1963).

Richard Caton Woodville II

The London Printing & Publishing Company

Left: In 1757 Battle of Plassey, British troops secured Bengal for Britain's East India Company. Right: Scene from 1857-58 Sepoy rebellion. With suppression of uprising, British crown took direct control of Indian colony.

The French planters never acquired anything like the power of their British counterparts, and that was despite the French sugar colony in Haiti being vastly more productive. C.L.R. James also intimates that some of the British forces advocating abolition in the late 18th century were cynically manipulating French revolutionaries to do the same in order to undermine sugar production in the French colonies. There may be some truth in that.

The powerful British planter faction faced an opposition which included both enlightened intellectuals and capitalists promoting free trade. The growing conflict between the interests of the industry-based bourgeoisie and agriculture-based slave owners foreshadowed much of the economic and ideological conflict that would play out decades later across the Atlantic in the American Civil War of 1861-65. That war was begun by the South as a predatory campaign for the expansion of slavery, and the victory of the capitalist North meant slavery's abolition. At the time, Karl Marx was leading the International Working Men's Association (First International) and he penned articles and declarations to marshal working-class support for the North. "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black skin it is branded," he went on to note in Volume One of *Capital*.

Back in Britain, the passage of the Abolition Act had come in 1807, but concessions to the planters meant that slavery actually continued in the British colonies for another 30 years or so. The Abolition Act nevertheless marks the significant point at which the economic and political power of the industrialists overwhelmed that of the planters. Thereafter, as Eric Williams put it, "The center of gravity in the British Empire shifted from the Caribbean Sea to the Indian Ocean, from the West Indies to India."

Historians generally date the origins of the Industrial Revolution to the latter part of the 18th century. Certainly, the American War of Independence and the collapse of the mercantile system uncorked production. And James Watt's improvement to the Newcomen steam engine is more or less concurrent with American independence—about 1776, which is to say 30 years before the Abolition Act in Britain and 60 years and more before slavery in the British colonies had mostly ended. Moreover, Watt's efforts at re-engineering the steam engine were directly underwritten by profits of the slave economy. And in 1860, 53 years after the Abolition Act, 75 percent of all British cotton was slave cotton from the American South. That is why the rulers of Britain supported the South during the American Civil War, as Marx pointed out at that time.

To recap, the Industrial Revolution grew out of a ready-made industry just humming along on tbe slave economy. Port facilities were marvellously improved at great expense and supported by factories with a quite modern proletariat. The slave trade wasn't the whole of the Industrial Revolution—not by a long shot—but it definitely was its firm foundation. For further study I would highly recommend comrade Jacob Zorn's presentation, "Slavery and the Origins of American Capitalism" (*WV* Nos. 942, 943 and 944, 11 and 25 September and 9 October 2009).

Samuel Austin

Liverpool dock, circa 1830: The city was both a manufacturing center for slave ships and key hub for the slave trade, whose profits financed Britain's Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution and India

Earlier we looked into why Germany, Spain or France did not become the first advanced capitalist-imperialist empire. Well, why not India?

In 1600, when Queen Elizabeth founded the East India Company, India had a huge economy and possessed weaving technology at least equal to that of contemporary England. India alone produced about 25 percent of the world's manufactured goods, more than all of Europe combined. That continued right up to the 18th century. Compared to Elizabethan England, India had well over 25 times the population and land, which included present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

But Mughal India had begun to disintegrate and the emerging rival princely states were increasingly subordinated in alliances with the various colonial powers. This started with the Portuguese who arrived in the 1500s, followed by the Dutch and then the English in the early 1600s and later the French. The race to dominate the highly lucrative spice trade with India became a huge impetus for all the European powers to develop their naval power and extend their reach economically and militarily.

Britain succeeded in dominating French power in the Seven Years War between 1756 and 1763. This was a conflict between all the great powers of the day, and it extended across Europe, North America, the Caribbean, West Africa, the Philippines and, of course, India. The outstanding issue, as with all "great power" conflicts, was over who would rule the world.

The British victory in the 1757 Battle of Plassey is seen as the pivotal point in British supremacy in South Asia. It established the rule of the British East India Company in Bengal, which provided a rich staging ground to drive out the Dutch and French rivals. The British expropriated huge tracts of land, providing revenue through taxes and plunder for further conquest by the Company. This early period of colonial rule extracted enormous revenue through outright pillage, taxation and extortionate "tributes" from the besieged and occupied princely states.

By the end of the 18th century, cotton had already displaced British wool. It's no wonder, given that the bulk of British cloth went into Africa in trade for slaves or to the colonies. Both destinations were hot and humid climes where cotton clothing is superior to wear.

However, Indian cottons upset the proverbial apple cart. Better and cheaper, they were displacing the English product in Africa and even threatened to dominate the domestic English market. Prohibitive

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Spartacist Forums

Mexico: Outrage Over Massacre of Ayotzinapa Students

BAY AREA

Saturday, March 21, 4 p.m.
1904 Franklin Street
Suite 407, Oakland
(1 block east of
19th Street BART station)
For more information: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, March 28, 4 p.m.
Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Avenue
(2 blocks north of Vermont/Sunset
Redline Metro station)
For more information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

Imperialism...

(continued from page 9)

import duties were slapped on Indian products coming into England. Export duties were also imposed in British India, and together those quickly destroyed India's trade in cotton and soon that of all other Indian manufactures. Although India had long been a producer and exporter of fine cotton goods, it was shortly reduced to exporting raw cotton to Manchester and importing finished English material on a scale that kept Manchester booming for decades.

That marked the first step in the transformation from the earlier, direct piratical extortion of wealth to a more modern and "respectable" bourgeois form of expropriation—which would become a classic impediment to the growth of the productive forces of the captive consumer nation. By the 1850s, the British East India Company in league with the British army and navy had control of most of the Indian subcontinent. This was the nursery of the British foreign policy famously known as "divide and rule," which exploited regional and religious rivalries. Britain imposed a dumbed-down education system stripped of science in an attempt to create a subordinate and dependant population.

Wherever and whenever the Industrial Revolution took hold, it meant the destruction of the artisan class. Not infrequently this was a brutal process. Nevertheless, the Industrial Revolution transformed society as it unleashed productive capacity: steam power, iron smelting, innovations with chemicals, mining and transportation. There was all that and more. Old, outmoded thinking fell away alongside the outmoded productive forms. In this sense, early capitalism was a powerful economic driver of innovation and technological achievement and science. The Industrial Revolution ramped up production and catapulted Britain into becoming the undisputed dominant world power with a virtual monopoly in manufacturing.

But in colonial India the Industrial Revolution played out quite differently. For centuries, the state exacted taxes and wealth from the villages in the form of goods and produce, but largely maintained the ancient village-based land system which generated that wealth. Public works provided regular irrigation to deliver water and nutrients for agriculture, which consisted of food, cotton and jute production. The village system provided economic sustenance to the village-based artisans including those of the important cotton trade. Now, this was a class-based society—not some kind of primitive idyllic communism—and there were larger urban centres with manufacture as well.

The British East India Company extorted Indian wealth on a massive scale. Economic disruption, both intentional and incidental, and the thorough neglect of public works, led to a collapse of Indian manufacture and agriculture. It produced intense impoverishment of its peoples which continues to this day. It is interesting to note, however, that the falling rate of profit and the declining ability of India to absorb British manufactures forced the British to begin manufacturing in India. That is to say, one could not endlessly extract wealth, impoverish the populace and pour British manufactures into the country without effect.

In 1830, the railway between Liverpool and Manchester opened. It was the beginning of the modern rail era and it sparked a worldwide railway construction boom, marking the heyday of the Industrial Revolution. Incidentally, it was in 1836 that the first railway opened in Canada: all the early equipment was British made. Rail construction was the selling point for Confederation here. B.C. joined explicitly on that promise of a transcontinental railway, which was financed through a scandalous land-grant scheme and finally completed, to great fanfare, in 1886. In India, British finance capital had by 1875 poured upwards of 100 million pounds into the railways and by 1880 had laid nearly 15,000 kilometres of rail there. That was initially with British locomotives and rolling stock of British manufacture, which were later manufactured locally in India.

Though British firms owned outright five-sixths of the tea industry from an earlier period, I think that the rail investment demonstrates the importance that the export of capital had assumed. The British rulers were massively extorting dividends for the Indian rail system. Moreover that system was designed not to connect the Indian economy together, but to send its wealth abroad with as little delay as possible.

Concurrent with the spoliation of India, Britain of course applied itself vigorously and imperiously throughout Asia, especially in China, as well as in Africa and the Near East, but that is all well beyond the scope of this talk. The *epoch* of imperialism started at the very end of the 19th century. But as Lenin noted, "two important distinguishing features of imperialism were already observed in Great Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century—vast colonial possessions and a monopolist position in the world market."

T. Allom

Textile factories utilizing the power loom exemplified the technological dynamism of early English capitalism.

Marxism and the Colonial Question

Frequently one encounters the assertion by Third World nationalists that Marx and Engels were somehow tainted with colonialism. There are often two complementary sides to this hind-sighted discourse. On the one hand, there is an associated fantasy image of the idyllic peasant life prior to industrialization. On the other, there is a false and haughty rendering of Marx and Engels' positions and sympathies.

Marx and Engels originally had hoped that the positive aspects of industrialization and free trade would spread to the colonies as a liberating force which would elevate those pre-industrial nations into the modern world. In 1853 Marx wrote an article titled "The Future Results of British Rule in India" where he said:

> "England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia."

Remember, at that time, imperialism was not fully developed.

But there was never any confusion about Marx and Engels' sympathies. They were not blind or indifferent to the monumental crimes committed by Western powers against the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas. They viewed such crimes as the overhead historical cost for the modernization of these backward regions.

This projection was not borne out by the actual course of development. In fact, even though the capitalists did introduce certain elements of modern industrial technology into their colonies and semi-colonies, for example transportation, the overall effect was to arrest the social and economic development of these countries. By the mid 19th century, the European bourgeoisies ceased to be a historically progressive class against the old feudal-derived aristocracies—with the key turning point being the defeat of the 1848 European revolutions.

Marxism is a science. It is based not on received wisdom but on observation and analysis of social reality. Marxists are not infallible and, indeed, Marx and Engels learned from their observations and analyses of capitalist development and expansion. They developed a different attitude toward colonialism, which was expressed, for example, in their defence of the 1857-58 Sepoy rebellion in India and their condemnation of its torturous repression by the British.

In Ireland, too, the British smashed down every industry. Reactionary oppression and continued impoverishment reduced the Irish to being mere providers of cheap, consumable foodstuffs for English tables and cheap, consumable workers for British factories. Marx came to recognize that the liberation of Ireland from under the British boot was a precondition for the liberation of the British proletariat. Writing in a 9 April 1870 letter to Siegfried Meyer and August Vogt, he states:

> "Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker.... The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English rule in Ireland*."

The Imperialist Epoch and Labour Reformism

In a 7 October 1858 letter to Marx, Friedrich Engels pointed to the corrupting influence of imperialism on the proletariat of the advanced countries. He wrote:

> "...the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie."

Britain was the first of the modern imperialist powers. But it couldn't hold onto its place of privilege forever. By the dawn of the 20th century, the entire world had been divided among rival imperialist powers, centrally France, Germany, the United States and Japan. The epoch of imperialism—the final stage of capitalism—had begun. In 1914 came World War I, interimperialist slaughter on a scale never before seen.

As the British rulers came under pressure from other imperialist powers, they could no longer aim at buying off or "bourgeoisifying" the entire British proletariat. Instead, in all the imperialist countries there emerged a thin layer, the labour aristocracy, bribed with some of the superprofits that the bourgeoisie reaped from its colonies. In most cases, this aristocracy of labour became the bulwark of reformist parties of the working class—what Engels and later Lenin called "bourgeois workers parties." With leaderships and outlooks that were pro-imperialist, these parties used their connections to the workers movement, as well as the occasional dubious pretension to socialism, in order to rally support for their own ruling classes in the First World War.

In sharp contrast to such parties, like the Labour Party in Britain, the Social Democrats in Germany and the Mensheviks in Russia, Lenin's Bolsheviks led a socialist revolution through taking a clear stand against imperialism and reformism. Calling for the defeat of all the great powers in World War I, the Bolsheviks had some success in transforming the interimperialist war into a civil war—a revolutionary war of workers and other oppressed peoples against their exploiters. In contrast to imperialist wars of predation, wars that were waged by colonial countries against their colonizers were considered by the Bolsheviks to be just and progressive. Lenin and his cothinkers fought for the international working class to wield its social power in support of such wars of liberation, while at the same time seeking to break the colonial masses from their existing leaderships, which were rooted in bourgeois and precapitalist exploiting classes.

I think that's a good place to wrap up our class on the rise of imperialism. We started out with the forging of the capitalist system in the Protestant Reformation, from the 1525 Peasant War in Germany through to the English Civil War of 1642-51. As Engels put it:

> "In the so-called religious wars of the Sixteenth Century, very positive material class-interests were at play, and those wars were class wars just as were the later collisions in England and France. If the class struggles of that time appear to bear religious earmarks, if the interests, requirements and demands of the various classes hid themselves behind a religious screen, it little changes the actual situation, and is to be explained by conditions of the time."
>
> —*The Peasant War in Germany* (1850)

From there, we tackled slavery and colonialism—how they fueled the Industrial Revolution and paved the way for the imperialist epoch. And that is where we remain today. To put an end to the imperialist system of war and neocolonial domination and replace it with a planned, socialized economy, the proletariat needs to smash the capitalist system. That in turn requires a political struggle against the reformists who are an obstacle to that perspective. ■

Zionist...

(continued from page 5)

slavery, the Spartacus Youth Club initiated a united-front picket at which protesters denounced him as a racist ideologue.

The totally false equation of any criticism of Israel with anti-Jewish bigotry is pushed by a well-funded, well-oiled machine, supported by institutions ranging from university administrations to government agencies. The national antagonism between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinian Arabs stems from each nation's legitimate claim to the same sliver of land—an antagonism that cannot be equitably resolved under capitalism. We seek to forge class unity between the Arab and Jewish workers of the region. To break the Jewish working class from its allegiance to Zionist ideology, and resulting loyalty to the racist Israeli rulers, will surely be very difficult. At the same time, Palestinian nationalism is equally an obstacle to the internationalist program needed to build fundamental class unity against the exploiters. Palestinian freedom can only be won in the struggle to shatter the Zionist state from within through working-class revolution, as part of the fight for a socialist federation of the Near East. The necessary condition for achieving this goal is building internationalist Trotskyist parties throughout the region and in the imperialist centers. The Spartacus Youth Clubs—as the youth auxiliaries of the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League—are dedicated to the perspective of forging a revolutionary workers party here in the belly of the imperialist beast. ■

Immigrants...

(continued from page 1)

the result of decades of U.S. imperialist depredations and violence fueled by Washington's "war on drugs." The number of refugees from Central America has dropped off recently, with Washington leaning heavily on the Mexican government to crack down on migrants inside its borders. Under the pretext of fast-tracking the immigration cases of the Central American refugees, thousands of others have had their hearings postponed until 2019. They are now in limbo—unable to visit their families abroad or obtain work permits and green cards—with the delays increasing the likelihood of eventual deportation. We say: Free all the detainees! No deportations!

DHS chief Jeh Johnson upholds the wholesale detention of women and children as an "effective deterrent" to new immigration, the revived ICE policy that was struck down by a federal judge on February 20. The Obama administration has not yet stated whether it will appeal, but its appetites were made clear by its budget request for next year: hundreds of millions more for adult and family detention beds as well as for "intensive supervision or electronic monitoring" of those not detained.

In addition to those locked up in detention centers, some 25,000 immigrants are incarcerated in privately run Criminal Alien Requirement (CAR) prisons. The plight of these prisoners was captured in a June 2014 report by the American Civil Liberties Union titled "Warehoused and Forgotten." On February 20, up to 2,000 immigrants took over one such prison camp, Willacy County Correctional Center in Raymondville, Texas, to protest their deplorable medical care. This was the third mass protest by prisoners at that facility since 2012. After parts of the prison were damaged and the uprising suppressed, the Feds declared the prison to be "uninhabitable" and began transferring inmates to other, as yet undisclosed, locations.

In truth, the prison camp, known locally as "Ritmo" (a combination of Raymondville and Gitmo, the nickname for U.S. imperialism's Guantánamo Bay torture center) was never habitable. The men were crammed into ten overcrowded and squalid tents; the showers and often-overflowing toilets were in the open with no partitions. Prisoners with serious illness or injury complained of only receiving Tylenol or ibuprofen as treatment. One prisoner interviewed by the ACLU suffered from hepatitis that had been left untreated. For running this hellhole for a decade, its operating company, Management & Training Corporation, was awarded $532 million by the federal government.

Most of the inmates in Willacy and the twelve other for-profit CAR prisons are locked up for the supposed crime of illegal entry or re-entry into the U.S. In the past, unlawful entry was treated as a civil offense punished only by deportation, but in recent years many immigrants are tossed into CAR prisons, some sentenced for up to 20 years. Between 1998 and 2012, the number of people entering federal prisons for immigration offenses soared from under 10,000 to over 23,000. More people are sent to federal prison each year for immigration offenses than for all else, except for drug convictions. Categorizing unauthorized entry into the country as a crime also boosts the claims of *la migra* that most of the people they deport are criminals; for many their only "crime" is seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

AP

January 15: Immigrant rights activists outside federal courthouse in Brownsville, Texas, protest against Governor Greg Abbott's efforts to block Obama's executive action on immigration.

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S., making up more than 5 percent of the total labor force. These workers are concentrated in domestic services, construction and agriculture—nearly half of farm laborers are undocumented. The roundup and deportation of immigrants threatens all labor by attacking its most vulnerable sections. Organizing immigrant workers and defending immigrant rights are crucial to revitalizing the labor movement.

The unions should champion full citizenship rights for everyone living in this country, that is, everything from the right to vote to the right to a U.S. passport, as well as access to medical care, bilingual education and what remains of the threadbare social "safety net." Such a fight would cut across the efforts of the capitalist exploiters to sow divisions within the working class and go a long way toward solidifying the unity of workers, both native-born and immigrant.

Obama's Immigration Reform Scam

Obama's November executive actions would allow undocumented immigrants who had arrived in the U.S. before turning 16 years old, as well as parents of American citizens, to apply for permission to stay in the U.S. for three years. The prospect of up to 4.9 million people being able to avoid deportation, however briefly, is welcome. But the proposals, on top of offering only temporary relief and no real path to citizenship, are full of loopholes and caveats. Applicants have to come up with $465 for a fee, gather documentation proving they have lived in the U.S. since 2010, and pass a background check. Anyone convicted of a felony or one "significant misdemeanor" or three lesser misdemeanors would be ineligible. Keep in mind that entering the country without inspection is classed a federal misdemeanor and that re-entry after deportation is a felony.

Having to declare their "illegal" status to the racist capitalist government will surely deter many potential applicants, as was the case under the 2012 Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals. Over its first two years, barely half of those eligible applied under that program. Even if they are allowed to stay and pay taxes, immigrants will remain barred from Obamacare, food stamps and other government benefits. Moreover, there is no guarantee that permission to stay would be renewed in three years. Not to mention that the government may well use the information it has collected to expedite deportations.

The section of the bourgeoisie that rants about "American culture"—that is, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture—being overrun by those from south of the border, was outraged by Obama's executive actions. A lawsuit by Texas and 25 other states resulted in a federal court ruling that blocked implementation of Obama's plan, though the administration has filed an appeal. The raw bigotry of right-wing Republicans allows Obama and the Democrats to dress themselves up as friends of immigrants.

But the Democratic Party, no less than the Republicans, is a capitalist party. Both parties seek to regulate immigration in accordance with the fluctuating labor needs of the capitalists, even if at the moment they disagree on the particulars. Indeed, Obama's "reform" is intended to benefit a particular section of the U.S. capitalist class by ensuring a large pool of vulnerable immigrants who can be made to work for a pittance with no job protection, no assured immigration status and no democratic rights. In response to a clamor from tech companies and manufacturers, Obama also wants to make available more "guest workers" with particular skills, at substantially lower wages.

As ever, the trade-union bureaucracy plays an important role in disguising the nature of the Democrats as a party of the class enemy. Trumpeting Obama's executive actions as "a major victory," the leadership of the heavily immigrant Service Employees International Union (SEIU) warned Congressional leaders that working people "will hold them accountable in the streets and at the ballot box in 2016." For the SEIU tops, every maneuver by the Republicans is another excuse to get out the vote for the Democrats.

Similarly effusive was AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka, who hailed the administration for advancing "the moral and economic interests of our country." Such statements, typical of a union officialdom that is ever loyal to capitalism, are designed to obscure the fact that the economic interests of the country's filthy rich owners of industry and commerce are directly counterposed to those of the workers they exploit to amass their profits. While expressing a "concern" over the planned expansion of guest worker programs, Trumka went on to offer the services of the AFL-CIO bureaucrats to help "ensure that new workers will be hired based on real labor market need," that is, to help control the flow of labor to maximize profit.

The working class can better its position, including that of its immigrant component, only by waging class struggle against the capitalist rulers. Such a perspective, which must entail an unwavering commitment to the fight against black oppression and attacks on immigrants, is anathema to the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy. What is needed is a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions.

Our aim is to unite the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, in the struggle for proletarian revolution to expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class and begin the socialist reconstruction of society. Our model is the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which for the first time in history placed the working class in power. Among the early acts of the fledgling workers state was to grant full rights to immigrant workers, as laid out in its 1918 constitution: "Acting on the principle of the solidarity of the toilers of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic grants all political rights enjoyed by Russian citizens to foreigners resident within the territory of the Russian Republic provided they belong to the working class or to the peasantry not using hired labor."

In the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, we fight for workers revolution across the globe: in the U.S. and other imperialist centers as well as in the dependent countries in Latin America and elsewhere. To succeed in that end, the working class requires the leadership of a revolutionary workers party. Such parties must be built in each country as sections of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International—the world party of socialist revolution. ■

Pasco, WA...

(continued from page 1)

Many people have expressed hope in an investigation of Zambrano's killing by the federal government. However, the purpose of such investigations has never been to rein in cop terror, but to whitewash it—as shown in the Justice Department recommendation in January that no charges be brought against Michael Brown's killer. Neither would the purpose be to protect the immigrant population of Pasco, which is nearly 60 percent Latino. It is the federal government under Obama that is directing the nationwide anti-immigrant crackdown of massive deportations and detentions.

In recent years, Pasco has attracted thousands of immigrants who toil for a pittance in temporary and dangerous jobs in the surrounding fields. They are patrolled by mostly white police forces that treat them with contempt. But the answer is not to recruit more Latino cops, as some spokesmen for Pasco's Latino community advocate, which would just put a different face on the same enemy and if anything, improve the effectiveness of the police in going after immigrants. Incorporating sizable numbers of black cops into the police forces of major cities has done nothing to lessen cop brutality. No amount of tinkering with the machinery of state repression can change the nature of the police.

The fight against police terror cries out for the mobilization of the enormous potential social power of the industrial working class welded to the anger of the ghetto and barrio poor. Such a class-struggle fight must be based on the understanding that the interests of the exploited and oppressed are counterposed to those of the capitalist rulers, their state forces and their political parties—whether Democrat or Republican. Black, white, immigrant—all workers need a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose aim is the uprooting of the entire capitalist system. Socialist revolution is the only way to avenge the death of Antonio Zambrano-Montes and the many other victims of this decaying order. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Police Terror and Black Oppression

Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement

The following is a presentation, edited for publication, by Spartacist League spokesman Diana Coleman, who was an activist in the Southern Civil Rights Movement, at a February 21 forum in New York City. Her presentation began with Nina Simone's version of the song "Strange Fruit" about lynching in America.

PART ONE

"Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swingin' in the Southern breeze
Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees..."

"Strange Fruit," originally sung by Billie Holiday, was written by a Jewish member of the Communist Party (CP) from New York, Abel Meeropol, who got a fair amount of government harassment for writing it. Meeropol and his wife are also known for adopting the children of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg after the two were executed for supposedly being Soviet spies at the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt in 1953.

Why play a song about lynching? As Isabel Wilkerson, who wrote the useful book *The Warmth of Other Suns* (2010) about the "Great Migration" of blacks to the North, commented recently: "For the most banal of missteps, the penalty could be an hours-long spectacle of torture and lynching. No trial, no jury, no judge, no appeal. Now, well into a new century, as a family in Ferguson, Missouri, buries yet another American teenager killed at the hands of authorities, the rate of police killings of black Americans is nearly the same as the rate of lynchings in the early decades of the 20th century." That is, a few times every week. The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement's 2012 annual report lists 313 black people killed by cops, security guards or vigilantes: that's one life snuffed out every 28 hours.

Here we are, celebrating Black History Month in the context of racist cop terror and the wanton murder of black people in this country, which has been going on for a long time. Every day, there are new reports of killings. But people are demonstrating and that's good.

Michael Brown, an unarmed black 18-year-old in Ferguson, executed in broad daylight by a white cop for the "crime" of walking in the street, and whose lifeless body was left there for hours; Eric Garner, killed for selling louse cigarettes; Akai Gurley, killed while walking down a staircase with his girlfriend in the New York projects; Tamir Rice, a black 12-year-old playing with a toy gun in a Cleveland park, shot by a cop and left to die while his 14-year-old sister was handcuffed and put in a police car where she watched her brother bleed out; Ezell Ford, a mentally disturbed young black man, shot by Los Angeles cops for walking around his neighborhood. There is also Trayvon Martin, shot by a homicidal wanna-be cop, and Oscar Grant, killed by a transit cop in Oakland.

Nor should we forget Manuel Jamines of L.A., a Guatemalan day laborer of indigenous background who spoke neither English nor Spanish, yelled at by cops and shot in the head at point-blank range for being "threatening" while obviously empty-handed and confused. And even a 95-year-old white veteran in an assisted living facility in Chicago who refused to leave his room, shot dead by cops in 2013.

Winston-Salem Journal

Local 22 tobacco workers during 1947 strike against R.J. Reynolds, with factory superintendent in background.

Of those cases, only Oscar Grant's killer went to jail, and that was for a minimal time; the rest of them walked away and mostly got a paid vacation out of it. Now the cops act as "judge, jury and executioner" instead of the lynch mob. Some progress! The promises of the civil rights movement—and the bloody American Civil War before it—are left unfulfilled and will stay that way until capitalism is overturned. Because beneath the raw, bleeding abscess of police brutality, there is the slower destruction of black people's lives caused by capitalist economic decay, ongoing discrimination and the all-sided racial oppression that is integral to the American capitalist system.

Police reform is a hoax and a hustle. Federal investigations go nowhere and the Democrats are simply the soft cops of the capitalist system. There is no road to black liberation and the liberation of all working people short of workers revolution. That is the basic point of this talk.

Racism, Repression, Poverty

In the 2008 and 2012 election years, we caught quite a bit of flak for putting forward our class opposition to both the capitalist Democrats and Republicans and calling Obama the commander-in-chief of racist U.S. imperialism. I remember being chased around a supermarket parking lot by an enraged, elderly black lady who was sure I was working for the Republican Party. I tried everything, including our slogans for black liberation through socialist revolution and for a revolutionary workers party, but nothing worked. All she could imagine was that I was a Republican operative.

Yet, when we said that the hopes for "change" around the incoming Obama administration would be brutally dashed, we were very right. Endless racist cop terror has made Obama's reference to the U.S. as a "colorblind" society pretty threadbare. The reality for most of black America has been, and still is: prison hell, unemployment, home foreclosures, rat-infested ghettos and prison-like inner-city schools.

Around the world, U.S. imperialism under Obama, no less than under Bush, continues to rampage. As we said in one of our seminal works, "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" (1966, reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9): "The struggle for Negro freedom takes place not only within the national arena, but within an international context. U.S. capitalism, which doubly exploits black workers, is the cornerstone of world imperialism." In the Near East, the imperialists are responsible for the bloody chaos of the region. Any blow to the imperialist forces, even by forces as repugnant as ISIS, would serve the interests of the international working class. While politically opposing these reactionaries, we place ourselves militarily on their side when they aim their fire against U.S. imperialism and its local proxies.

Let's be clear: U.S. imperialism has burned, bombed, napalmed, tortured and committed mass murder on a scale that ISIS can never achieve. Indeed, such barbarism is an essential part of imperialist subjugation. And it's hardly any surprise to now find out that an American torturer in Guantánamo got his experience torturing black people in Chicago. We say: U.S. imperialism hands off the world!

Here at home, Wall Street is making out like the bandits that they are. Corporate profits are breaking historical records while millions are unemployed or underemployed. With "low-wage America" a popular buzzword, Obama continues his talk about raising the minimum wage to a "fabulous" $10.10 an hour. The reformist left—from Socialist Alternative to the Workers World Party to the International Socialist Organization—are pushing $15 an hour. So I conclude that the difference between the reformist pseudu-socialists and the Democratic Party is $4.90 an hour. You would think that even reformists would want a bigger reform than that!

Though buurgeois pundits keep talking

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strikefastfood.org

4 December 2014: "Hands Up" solidarity gesture by St. Louis fast-food workers during national day of action against poverty wages.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

WORKERS VANGUARD

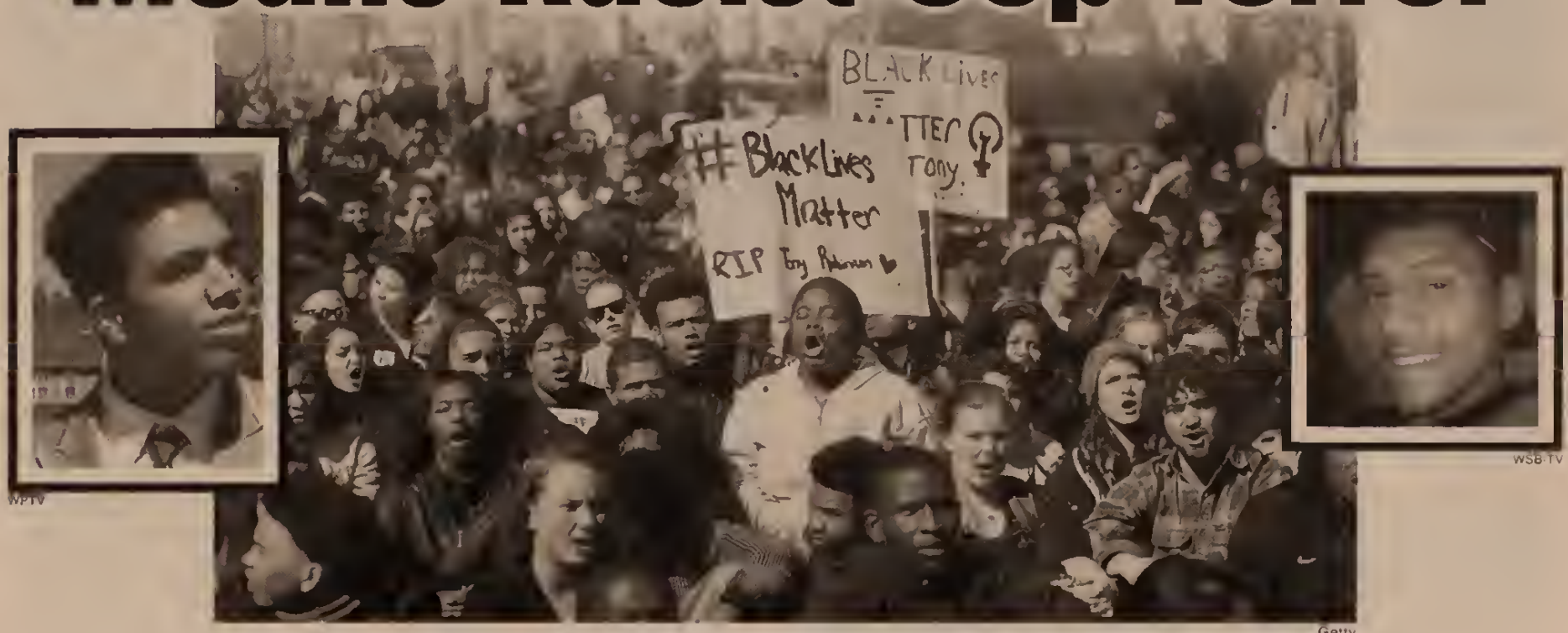
50¢

No. 1064

20 March 2015

Ferguson, Madison, Nationwide

Capitalist Rule Means Racist Cop Terror



WPTV

WSB-TV

Getty

Students and others protest in Madison, Wisconsin, against cop killing of Tony Robinson (left), March 9. Right: Anthony Hill, another recent victim of racist police.

In front of a crowd commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama, President Barack Obama offered a rehash of the bald-faced lie that racism is no longer "endemic" to America. This tune is to be expected from the black overseer of a system that criminalizes young black men as part of maintaining the racial oppression that is woven into the fabric of American capitalist society.

Obama declared that "what happened in Ferguson" is "no longer sanctioned by law or custom," as it was before the 1950s-'60s civil rights movement. In fact, under its liberal leadership, that struggle, while leading to the dismantling of legal segregation in the South, could not challenge the systemic police violence, poverty and misery that define life for the black masses. Within days of Obama's speech, killer cops had taken the lives of more unarmed black men, including Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old recent high school graduate in

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Life and Death on Skid Row

LAPD Guns Down Homeless Man

LOS ANGELES—Millions have watched the video of cops carrying out the cold-blooded execution of an unarmed homeless black man, Charly Leundeu Keunang (known as "Africa" or "Cameroon"), in broad daylight on March 1. After the gang of cops surrounded and savagely beat Keunang on a crowded Skid Row sidewalk, three opened fire and blew him away—yet another victim of racist cop terror. The shooting happened just a block from where Carlos Ocana, who was homeless and mentally ill, fell to his death last year after a cop tasered him on a rooftop. The LAPD's snuffing out another life has sparked protests by Keunang's friends, advocates for the homeless and leftists.

The LAPD and city administration of Democratic mayor Eric Garcetti have gone into high gear to blame Keunang for his own death, claiming that he reached for a cop's gun. The police often resort to this tired excuse, including last August when they gunned down Ezell Ford, a 25-year-old black man plagued by mental health issues. Meanwhile, the bourgeois press is working to defame Keunang's character—digging up a 15-year-old bank robbery as if it's relevant—just as they slandered Michael Brown as "no angel."

Ventura County Sheriff's Office (inset); Anthony Blackburn

Inset: Charly Leundeu Keunang, known as "Africa." Still from video shows Keunang's death at hands of L.A. cops on Skid Row, March 1.

While hailing the LAPD as "one of the most progressive forces anywhere in the world," Garcetti told people to remain calm and await an official investigation. Any such investigation will be nothing more than a whitewash. Such was the case when a jury let off the cops in Orange County who brutally beat to death the homeless Kelly Thomas in July 2011. In each instance, the police were just doing what they are paid to do: enforce racist "law and order" on behalf of the capitalist rulers. Scores of homeless people die ***every day*** across America, but not fast enough for the ruling class, for whom the homeless, as this class-divided society's castoffs, are not worth spending a dime on.

Police Occupation of Skid Row

The cops who killed Keunang were assigned to Skid Row, tasked with the daily forcing of homeless people off the sidewalks under the so-called Safer Cities Initiative (SCI). Initiated in 2006 under Democratic mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the SCI war on the homeless is an application of the "broken windows" strategy of policing that current New York City police commissioner William Bratton brought to L.A. in 2002 when he arrived to head up the LAPD. By the logic of

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Sacramento, California

Cops Charge Black Activist with "Lynching"

Defend Maile Hampton!

On January 18, Maile Hampton, a young black woman and member of the ANSWER Coalition, was leading chants at a Sacramento, California, protest against a pro-cop rally. An online video shows the cops violently attacking several protesters, slamming a woman against a cop car and repeatedly throwing a man to the ground. While both were being handcuffed, the crowd chanted to let them go. Five weeks later, Hampton was arrested at her home. She now faces up to four years in jail on charges of felony "lynching"! As the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a March 14 letter protesting these outrageous charges: "A law supposedly intended to criminalize the extra-legal murder of black people, Mexicans and others by the racist terrorists of the KKK and their ilk, is now wielded by the police against those who actively protest the modern-day legal lynchings carried out by the racist cops."

Under the provisions of California's so-called "anti-lynching" law, "the taking by means of a riot of any person from the lawful custody of any peace officer is a lynching," a felony punishable by up to four years in prison. The law was enacted in 1933, a year in which 28 lynchings, 24 of black people, were officially reported in the U.S.—no doubt a small fraction of the actual number. In November that year, a howling mob of thousands stormed the San Jose jail, seizing, torturing and then stringing up two unemployed white men who were suspected of kidnapping and murdering the son of a wealthy local department store owner. Republican governor Jim Rolph praised the lynching as "the best lesson California has ever given the country" and pledged to pardon anybody convicted. Only one of the lynchers was ever charged under the "anti-lynching" law, a charge that was soon dropped.

Indeed, the law has never seriously been used against lynch terror. Instead, it came to be wielded by the courts and cops to expand and defend police powers. In a 1971 case, a California state judge argued that the word "lynching" did not mean seizing people in police custody in order to kill them. Instead, he ruled that a lynching was *any* protest against police arrest by "means of riot," that being defined as an unauthorized gathering of two or more people that "disturbs the peace."

In 1999, this ruling was taken to its Kafkaesque extreme in a court judgment that declared: "A person who takes part in a riot leading to his escape from custody can be convicted of his own lynching"! Among those who have been arrested on the charge of "self lynching" was Tiffany Tran, a diminutive Asian American, who was charged with lynching herself for yelling "help" as she and other activists were being hauled away by cops during a 2011 Occupy Oakland protest.

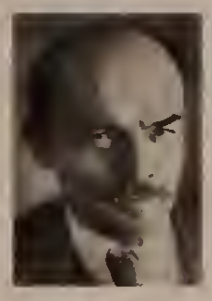
One of the more chilling applications of this "anti-lynching" law occurred last July in Murrieta, a small town in Southern California. In a throwback to the Klan terror and lynchings of Mexican immigrants in nearby San Diego during the 1930s, armed white racists mobilized to turn back busloads of Latino immigrants being shipped to a local detention facility. The only arrests that day were of five people who had courageously come out to protest the anti-immigrant frenzy, only to be charged with "lynching."

Here is an object lesson in not just the futility but the deadly danger of looking to the capitalist state to outlaw racist terror, whether that of Klan nightriders or the state's own marauding police thugs. As we have always argued, the government, its cops and courts will turn around and use such laws against the working class, the oppressed and any perceived challenge to the vicious exploitation and racism that defines the rule of American capitalism. The whole history of California's anti-lynching law is a graphic example.

We call on defenders of democratic rights and opponents of racist oppression to demand that all the charges against Maile Hampton be dropped now. Contact Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert by mail at 901 G Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, or by e-mail daoffice@sacda.org. Send copies to sac@ANSWERcoalition.org. ■

Reforge the Fourth International

TROTSKY



LENIN

Under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, the Fourth International was founded in 1938 as a proletarian vanguard in opposition to the social-democratic Second and Stalinized Third Internationals. With much of its best cadre wiped out during the World War II period, the Fourth International was destroyed in the early 1950s under its then-leader, Michel Pablo, who had impressionistically responded to the postwar social overturns and expansion of Stalinism. The Pabloites liquidated, wherever they could, into the Stalinist Communist Parties (and elsewhere into social-democratic or petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations), renouncing the need to build Trotskyist parties. Albeit belatedly and partially, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the U.S. joined the fight against this revisionist current.

Our forebears, the Revolutionary Tendency, waged a struggle within the SWP as it was succumbing to Pabloite revisionism in the early 1960s. Today, the International Communist League remains dedicated to the fight to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. We reprint below excerpts from an article anticipating the Fourth International's founding, which appeared as the lead in the first issue of the New International, *theoretical organ of the American Trotskyists in the 1930s.*

The whole history of the modern proletarian movement has only served to underscore the all-importance and indispensability of that most highly perfected of all its instruments: the political party. Especially in our time has it become the master key to all problems. The class war is fought by class armies. The working class as a whole—to say nothing of its necessary allies in other sections of the population—is not characterized by firm homogeneity, it is stratified at different levels of consciousness, it is divided by conflicting ideologies, by separatist interests of caste, religion, nationality, sex, age. Emerging from its ranks—but transcending these differences and consequently able to overcome them—is its vanguard, the revolutionary political party. The party embodies the accumulated experiences of the proletariat distilled into its revolutionary theory. It is the repository of the consciousness of the class. It embraces the most advanced, the most militant, the most devoted, unites them firmly on the basis of tested principles and welds them together in rigorous discipline....

The day of *national* revolutionary parties ended long ago, as did the day of national party programs. In the period when world politics and world economy exist as distinct entities, there can be only one revolutionary party—the International, with sections in every country....

The Fourth International? This is no meaningless phrase. ***It is a fighting program!*** It means a fight to the death against Fascism, imperialism, war. It means an intransigeant struggle against treacherous social reformism, bureaucratic Stalinism, cowardly compromising centrism of all species. It means the unconditional struggle to defend the Soviet Union which social democrats and Stalinists left in the lurch in Germany when they permitted the arch-anti-Sovietist Hitler to come to power without a battle. It means the militant struggle for revolutionary Marxism, for the final victory of the working class.

For the Fourth International! For revolutionary Marxism!

That is the unsullied banner our periodical will defend. In periods such as the one we are passing through now, it becomes fashionable in certain quarters to seek the reasons for defeat and reaction in all corners except where they are to be found, to trace the causes everywhere except to their roots. Not the traducers of internationalism are at fault; perhaps it is internationalism itself. Not the traducers of Marxism; perhaps it is Marxism itself which requires revision or "re-interpretation." As yesterday, so today, we shall continue to work with all our strength for all the fundamental theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which have been tested through and through and confirmed a thousand times over and from every angle.

—"For the Fourth International!" *New International* (July 1934)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is March 17.

No. 1064 **20 March 2015**

Correction on Cromwell and Calvinism

In its discussion of the 1642-51 English Civil War, Part One of the article "The Rise of British Imperialism" (*WV* No. 1062, 20 February 2015) blundered by referring to Oliver Cromwell as "the great Calvinist leader." A thoroughly religious man, Cromwell's sympathies lay with the Independents (today known as Congregationalists), which arose during the Puritan reformation of the Church of England. Although heavily influenced by the theology of John Calvin, the Independents were not the dominant Calvinist denomination, a position held by the Presbyterian church on the British Isles.

Most members of Parliament were Presbyterians when that body commissioned the New Model Army in 1645 to combat Royalist forces. Three years later, after Parliament moved to disband its army, whose ranks had been filled by Puritans under the leadership of Cromwell, the Presbyterians seeking to conciliate the monarchy were expelled from Parliament by force of arms in what became known as Pride's Purge. The Scottish Presbyterians, who switched sides in the course of the war, also drew the wrath of Cromwell's Puritan army. In 1650, Cromwell famously wrote in a letter to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ think it possible you may be mistaken."

Cromwell did not direct fire only at the Presbyterian compromisers. After the defeat of the Royalists in England, he crushed the radical egalitarian sects popular within the most plebeian layers of his army, such as the Levellers, who mutinied in 1649 over the planned invasion of Ireland. More than matters of religious doctrine were at play in the events of the English Revolution. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, observed:

> "The adherents of the Episcopalian, or Anglican (half-Catholic) Church, were the party of the court, the nobility, and of course the higher clergy. The Presbyterians were the party of the bourgeoisie, the party of wealth and education. The Independents and the Puritans in general were the party of the petty bourgeoisie, and the petty independent landowners. The Levellers were the incipient party of the left wing of the petty bourgeoisie, the plebs. Under the integument of ecclesiastical disputes, under the form of a struggle for the religious structure of the Church, there proceeded a social self-determination of classes, a regrouping of classes on new, bourgeois foundations. In politics, the Presbyterian party stood for a limited monarchy, the Independents, also sometimes called 'root and branch men,' or—in the language of our day—'radicals,' were for a republic. The lukewarm nature of the Presbyterians was fully in accord with the contradictory interests of the bourgeoisie, vacillating between the nobility and the plebs. The party of the Independents, which had dared to carry its ideas and slogans to their logical conclusion, naturally supplanted the Presbyterians in the towns and villages which were the centers of the awakened petty-bourgeois masses, who had become the most important force of the revolution."
>
> — "Where Is Britain Going?" (1925)

Lear Auto Contract Sellout

UAW Tops Tout Two-Tier Bait and Switch

In preparation for contract talks with the "Big Three" U.S. automakers (GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler) in September, UAW president Dennis Williams has addressed himself to the task of setting what he considers reasonable expectations for the membership. The rank and file is not, it seems, feeling all that reasonable. Workers are well aware that the Detroit auto giants are today swimming in profits, which were amassed by slashing hourly pay rates largely via the agency of the two-tier wage system. They are fed up with that system. Getting rid of it when the current contract expires tops the list of demands contained in bargaining resolutions submitted to UAW locals, according to a December survey by *The Detroit News*.

Equal Pay for Equal Work!
Organize the Unorganized!

UAW members should have more than ample cause for concern over the desire and ability of Williams and his cohorts to take up this fight. Consider the deal reached by the UAW bureaucrats with Lear Corporation, an auto parts manufacturer, last September. Far from ending two-tier level wages as advertised, it packaged the continuation of substandard and unequal compensation in a different manner.

Williams has given a nod and only a nod to the expectations of the membership in the upcoming negotiations. He recently reminded union members that older (top-tier) workers have not received a raise in nine years and that achieving equal pay for equal work with a wage increase is not likely to be achieved, despite the earlier lip service he gave to the objective. At a December press conference, Williams underlined his paramount concern: "It is about how we keep the companies competitive." This same rationale was given in 2007 when the UAW tops told workers that two-tier wages were necessary to make the Detroit Three competitive with their Asian and German rivals in the "right to work" South, and would preserve union jobs.

Such "America first" chauvinism is the stock in trade of the trade-union bureaucracy. The early American socialist Daniel De Leon aptly described these union tops as the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." The UAW was forged in the 1936-37 Flint sit-down strike, which successfully repulsed a cop assault and defied court injunctions, inspiring workers to occupy production lines in plant after plant across the country. The union was then tempered in the 1941 battles at Ford's River Rouge plant, where recognition was won by breaking through the racist barriers that blocked white workers from joining hands with their black class brothers. Those socialists and Communists who had been instrumental in these class battles were driven out of the union in the late 1940s by UAW president Walter Reuther, as part of quashing opposition to U.S. imperialism's Cold War against the Soviet Union.

The UAW International bureaucracy, known today as Solidarity House, reveals its allegiance to the bosses by its integration into the Democratic Party, one of the dual parties of capitalist rule in this country. Although Democratic Party politicos often hypocritically mouth concerns for the wellbeing of working people and the poor, what you usually get is the same raw deal in a seemingly prettier package. In 2007-09, then-UAW president Ron Gettelfinger worked hand-in-glove with both the outgoing Bush administration and with the newly elected Barack Obama to extend the two-tier concession and impose a six-year strike moratorium on auto workers as part of the bailout of the industry. So the workers got the shaft, and the fat cats responsible for the disaster afflicting the auto industry wouldn't have to dismantle their classic car collections.

At the end of World War II, the U.S. was the only imperialist power to emerge with its industrial infrastructure intact. In that context, the UAW was able to wield its strength to obtain good wages as well as unheard-of benefit packages (full health, mental health and pension coverage). Becoming one of the most formidable unions in the U.S., the union grew to a peak of about 1.5 million members in 1979. Since then, union membership has fallen sharply and there are now less than 400,000 UAW card holders, many in jobs unrelated to the auto industry.

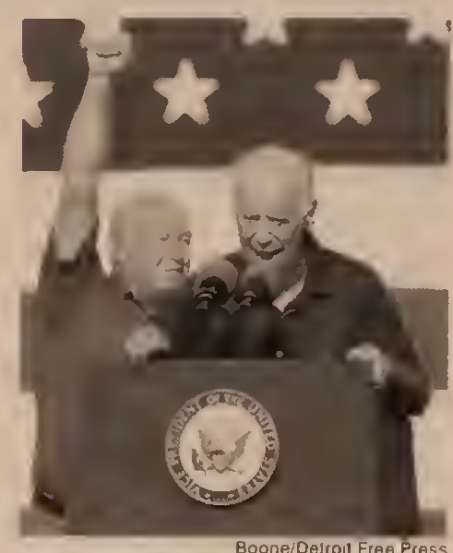
The decline in wages has been as precipitous, especially in parts manufacturing where nearly three-quarters of auto workers are now employed. The wage slashing of entry-level parts workers traces back to the mid 1980s, blossoming into the tier system, which was first introduced at major parts manufacturers like Delphi in the 2003 contract. GM had only recently divested itself of that company and begun to outsource many of its parts orders. Today, auto parts workers make roughly 63 percent as much as those employed in the assembly plants. Additionally, about 14 percent of the workforce at the parts plants consists of agency-provided contract workers (a growing trend common to all industry) whose median wage is just above $10 an hour.

This second-class status tramples on the historical role parts workers played in the organization of the auto industry. To no small extent, the impetus for the UAW's founding came from the giant 1934 Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, Ohio (then a center of the auto parts industry). Moreover, "just in time" assembly, where there are no inventory stockpiles, gives striking workers in small parts plants considerable clout in their struggles against the bosses. In 1998, a walkout at the Flint Metal Center plant, expanding to the Flint East Delphi Facility, resulted in the shutdown of 27 of GM's 29 North American assembly facilities due to lack of parts. Just as unorganized and often foreign-owned assembly plants (seven of which are now among the 15 most productive in the U.S.) have driven down the wages of workers in UAW-organized plants, the paltry hourly rates paid to workers in auto parts facilities have dragged down the wages earned by those on the assembly lines. Today, assembly workers earn 21 percent less than they did just over a decade ago.

Such givebacks have infuriated the workers and engendered distrust of the UAW leadership, which last June was met with some opposition when it pushed through a 25 percent union dues hike. The increase was purportedly to build up a strike fund, mysteriously depleted given the dearth of strike action, in advance of this September's contract expirations. Not a few of the union skeptics wondered how such an increase would serve to entice unorganized workers to join the UAW. Of course, a robust strike fund would help sustain workers in the event the union engages in class battle.

A Victory That Wasn't

The anger and militancy of the UAW workforce as well as the duplicity and treachery that the union hureaucracy willingly employs to shortchange the workers and do a solid for the bosses was evident in a strike last September against Lear in Hammond, Indiana. At that plant, an integrated workforce of some 760, most represented by UAW Local 2335, manufactures seats for the Explorer and Taurus vehicles assembled at Ford's nearby Chicago assembly plant on Torrence Avenue. A month after the old union contract had expired, negotiations were stalled: the two-tier system was the sticking point. Workers in UAW Local 551 at the Torrence plant, also aggrieved by the tier system, planned a solidarity demonstration under the banner "End Two Tier! Start with Lear!" at their plant.



Boone/Detroit Free Press

UAW president Dennis Williams, behind Democratic vice president Joe Biden at red-white-and-blue Labor Day parade in Detroit, 2014.

On September 13, Local 2335 pulled workers off the job, shutting down Lear's Hammond plant. Although union bureaucrats had earlier put the kibosh on the Torrence demonstration, its cancellation did not stop expressions of union solidarity. UAW members from nearby factories joined the Lear pickets, and Teamsters honored the lines. By 11:30 a.m., production on the Torrence assembly line was halted. Shortly after noon the next day, a tentative deal was announced. Union officials declared the two-tier wage scale at the Hammond plant dead and gone, trumpeting the "victory" as a model for contract talks with the Detroit Three. Lear also called the agreement a "breakthrough," a sure sign that the workers got screwed.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the news of the death of two-tier at Lear was greatly

continued on page 4

Book Launch and Discussion

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929

by Jacob Zumoff

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CORRECTIONS

Our obituary for Jeff Higgins (*WV* No. 1063, 6 March 2015) misidentified the Confederate flag that was burned. It was not the "stars and bars," which was the official flag of the Confederacy between 1861 and 1863, but the better-known Confederate battle flag. The article "Hong Kong Protests: Spearhead for Capitalist Counterrevolution" (*WV* No. 1054, 17 October 2014) wrongly referred to the National Democratic Institute as the National Democracy Institute.

UAW...

(continued from page 3)

exaggerated. Within days, word leaked that the UAW bureaucrats had omitted a key concession in ballyhooing the deal. The bulk of those in the lower tier would be reclassified as "subassembly" workers, to be shuttled off to a new location in nearby Portage, Indiana, and paid sub-living wages. The union tops had pulled a classic bait-and-switch operation. In 2007, when the UAW struck a deal with Chrysler after just six hours on the picket line, workers called their walkout a "Hollywood strike." The Lear action was also just for show, a production put on jointly by the Lear bosses and the UAW tops, designed to let an angry workforce blow off some steam before being presented a false bill of goods and sent back to work.

In the guise of eliminating tiers at Lear, the bureaucrats acceded to the creation of an entirely new category of workers making barely more than the federal minimum wage. Under this new sellout contract, workers who remain at the Hammond plant will start at $16.50 an hour and cap out at $21.58. Those at the Portage subassembly plant will start at $12 an hour and cap out at $15.25, well below the starting wage in Hammond. Lear human resources head Tom DiDonato bragged: "That is a whole different rate that makes us economically competitive." The strategy of carving up the workforce to weaken the unions is hardly limited to auto. A case in point was the 2008 Boeing Machinists strike, during which non-union contract workers, performing jobs once done on site by Machinists, supplied parts for a struck facility in the Seattle area.

In relegating an entire layer of lower paid wnrkers to a separate facility with fewer benefits, the UAW tops have done the bosses a real service. The dissension that the tier system engenders between workers can have an impact on the assembly line to the displeasure of management. For example, Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne, sounding more like the left wing of Solidarity House than a corporate fat cat, offered: "I do not think that it is a stable environment to promote an environment within our plants when you have two tiers of wages and you have people doing fundamentally the same type of work." In 2013, Marchionne notoriously threatened to pull the plug on auto production in Italy and ship it elsewhere if union workers did not cave in to his demands.

With the new Local 2335 contract, workers from different tiers won't be bumping elbows on the factory floor anymore. The tension that worries the auto bosses is dissipated when the second tier is renamed and off-sited. In addition, the solidarity between the tiers that was manifested in the strike is likely to be weakened. The bosses' hope is "out of sight, out of mind."

Watkins/Times of Northwest Indiana

Hammond, Indiana: Auto workers during brief strike at Lear plant last September. UAW bureaucrats falsely trumpeted settlement as a victory that ended the hated two-tier setup.

Come this September, the union tops are again likely to try to proclaim victory over the tier system while attempting to sell the membership a new scheme to preserve that system's attack on wages and working-class unity.

For a Class-Struggle Perspective

As a cover for its complicity in the driving down of wages, the UAW bureaucrats engage in chauvinist rants over unfair foreign competition. These outbursts are often in the service of pushing protectionist measures, which abet the efforts of the American bosses to set auto workers in the U.S. against auto workers elsewhere. Solidarity House has done damn little to organize the unorganized (900,000 plus workers are emplnyed in auto-related industries) and has harely touched the foreign-owned assembly plants here. In its attempt to gain a foothold in the South at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the UAW has circulated union authorization cards that read: "We recognize that our job security and our success as employees are bound up with the success of our company." It should be noted that the UAW lost its recognition vote last year after agreeing to abandon door-to-door and barstool organizing methods.

Everyone knows that the power of the UAW can be recovered only by a massive campaign to organize the South. This task is impossible without an attack against the race/caste oppression of black people that is the bedrock of the capitalist order in this country; racism has served as a wedge between black and white workers. It is no accident that with the UAW back on its heels, the rapacious usurers are now looting long-abandoned Detroit, the one-time center of the union's power. Nor is it an accident that the right-to-work South has come North, first to Indiana, then Michigan and most recently Wisconsin, all states with a significant number of auto-related manufacturers and significant numbers of UAW-organized workers.

It needs to he remembered that before the class battles of the 1930s that built the CIO industrial unions, workers had *no* rights vis-à-vis their employers, except the rights to have the crap beaten out of them and lose their job. The right of workers to organize had to be won on the battlefields of class struggle; the putatively pro-labor laws that were passed at the time came only after the working class had already begun to stir. The purpose of this legislation was to contain militant workers struggle within the framework of capitalist rule.

Thousands of strikes occurred up until the eve of World War II and a giant strike wave broke out in its immediate aftermath. By the mid 1950s, 35 percent of workers in this country were organized. That kind of class struggle is the short-term recipe for reversing the right-wing attacks on the union movement. There is only one long-term solution to the systemic poverty and immiseration of the working masses and the concurrent enrichment nf the bosses under capitalism and that is the overturn of the capitalist order hy the working class through socialist revolution.

If things look glum for working people now, they looked, if anything, worse at the onset of the Great Depression. Today, car sales are up and autn manufacturers have done some hiring (prompting some recent growth in UAW membership) and are looking to do more of the same. Ford has reached the contract limit for the percentage of lower-tier workers it can hire and may he forced to add new hires at tier-one rates. The exceptions to the second-tier cap granted by the UAW tops to Fiat Chrysler and GM are due to expire in September.

The auto manufacturers do have some money for bonuses and wage increases hut are not about to sacrifice the double-digit cuts to compensation that they have achieved with government intervention and the assistance of the union bureaucrats over the last two decades. The craven posture of union officialdom can only encourage the corporate vultures to demand more. Solidarity House wants to ohlige the bosses again hut not to the point that pissed-off auto workers turn them out ol office. The working and poor people in this country who have seen the rich get much richer while their own families get much poorer would undouhtedly be more than just a little pleased if action was taken to turn this state of affairs around. All in all. the situation for auto workers is not unfavorable and a strike in September is anticipated by many.

The class-collaborationism of the union bureaucracy has long threatened the very ability of the trade unions to survive. The disparity between the appetites of the pro-capitalist bureaucracy and the aspirations of dissatisfied workers cries out for the emergence of class-struggle leaders, both to head off betrayals by the union tops and to mobilize union power at the plant level. A militant strike that breaks the chain of reversals that have sapped the strength of the union movement would pave the way for a concerted battle to organize the unorganized. The fight to revive the watchword that workers share no interests with their hosses demands that labor sever its ties to the Democratic Party. Workers need their own party, a multiracial revolutionary internationalist workers party whose goal is not just to improve the present conditions of the working class but to do away with the entire system of wage slavery and to replace it with a planned econnmy under a workers government.■

Wayne State University

Detroit: Auto workers during bitterly fought 113-day UAW strike against General Motors in 1945-46. The union was forged, and gains won, through plant occupations and on the picket lines.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.
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Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd . Room 215

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Spartacist Forums

Mexico: Outrage Over Massacre of Ayotzinapa Students

BAY AREA

Saturday, March 21, 4 p.m.
1904 Franklin Street
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slbayarea@fastmail.net

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, March 28, 4 p.m.
Metropolitan Community Church
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Down With War on Refugees!

Full Citizenship Rights Now!

Refugee Action Collective

Above: Riot squad descends on Australia's Manus Island refugee detention camp, January 16. Right: Refugees on hunger strike, January 19.

no credit

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist *No. 225 (Autumn 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia.*

Australasian SPARTACIST

Under Australia's notorious mandatory detention policy, first implemented by the Keating Labor government and imposed by successive Liberal and Labor governments with increasing brutality, desperate refugees continue to be imprisoned indefinitely in detention camps under atrocious conditions. Many of those now incarcerated have fled imperialist devastation in their homelands of Afghanistan and Iraq or imperialist-backed terror in Sri Lanka. Under legislation introduced in 2013 by the then Rudd Labor government, refugees arriving by boat are now denied asylum in Australia. Thousands have been transferred to remote Pacific islands where they languish while their claims are "processed." On top of these measures the current Liberal/National Coalition government has closely cooperated with the murderous Sri Lankan regime to intercept and return refugees fleeing from there to Australia. Under a shroud of secrecy enforced by the government, Australian naval and customs authorities have also intercepted refugees at sea and forced them back to transit points in Indonesia.

Australia is the only country in the world that mandates the indefinite detention of refugee children as the first and only option. A recent report by the Australian Human Rights Commission into children in detention highlights the nightmare refugees experience. It revealed alarming rates of mental illness, self-harm, and assault. The [Tony] Abbott government's response to the report was to first delay its release and then denounce it as a political exercise.

The federal government's cruel mistreatment of refugees, fully backed by the Labor Party, is consistent with Australia's racist history, from the dispossession and brutal oppression of the Aboriginal people to the White Australia policy to keep Asian and dark-skinned masses out. Today, the ongoing war against immigrants and Aborigines is designed to sow divisions amongst the working class and thwart united struggles against the union-busting, profit-gouging capitalist rulers.

The multiracial proletariat has the social power and interest to come to the defence of refugees. But the obstacle to mobilising the working class is the pro-capitalist trade-union misleadership, which buys into and promotes Australian nationalism. A class-struggle leadership of the unions, linked to a revolutionary workers party, would fight to close the detention camps and inscribe on its banner: Full citizenship rights for all who have made it here!

We print below an 11 February protest letter to Peter Dutton, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, from the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) in Australia. The PDC is a class-struggle non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation whose political views are in accordance with the Spartacist League/Australia.

* * *

We protest the federal government's vicious persecution of refugees. For having the temerity to seek a safe place to live, refugees (including women and children) arriving in Australia by boat are held captive in detention centres. Suffering under the government's cruel policy of indefinite mandatory detention the only options given to these asylum seekers are to return to the country they fled, where they face the very real prospect of death, imprisonment or torture, or in the case of those incarcerated on Nauru and Manus Island, to "resettle" in impoverished Cambodia or Papua New Guinea (PNG).

With no other means of protesting, desperate refugees are increasingly putting their lives in jeopardy. In January hundreds of refugees went on hunger strike on Manus Island, protesting the conditions which they aptly likened to those at the notorious U.S.-run Guantánamo Bay prison and torture centre. The hunger strike ended when security guards stormed the compounds and amongst other things seized mobile phones, one of the few means refugees have of communicating their situation to the outside world.

It is reported that the Manus Island centre increasingly resembles a secretive prison camp with threats, arbitrary raids, beatings, and the disappearing of anyone thought to be "of interest." Approximately 58 refugees were forcibly removed from the detention centre and jailed in appalling conditions in the PNG prison system.

Iranian detainees on hunger strike against their indefinite detention at Darwin's Wickham Point detention centre are being met with the same callousness and contempt. This, despite the fact that one of them is close to death.

We condemn the government's ongoing persecution of asylum-seekers and demand: Close the detention centres! Release all the detainees immediately with full citizenship rights in Australia! ■

Stevan Kirschbaum Acquitted

Reinstate Boston School Bus Union Leaders Now!

On March 5, a jury took just ten minutes to acquit Boston school bus union leader Stevan Kirschbaum, who had been slapped with frame-up charges of assault and battery with a deadly weapon and trespassing as part of an anti-union vendetta. The verdict was a victory for the besieged drivers represented by United Steelworkers (USW) Local 8751, many of whom are Haitian, Cape Verdean or Latino, as well as for labor more broadly. Veolia Transportation (now called Transdev) has been waging a vicious union-busting campaign against this workforce since July 2013, when the Boston school district handed over operations of the school bus fleet to the company.

Workers World

Boston, March 5: Stevan Kirschbaum speaks to supporters outside courthouse after his acquittal.

The conflict between the union and the company flared up on 8 October 2013. With Veolia routinely flouting work rules, arbitrarily reassigning routes and short-changing drivers on their paychecks, the drivers demanded to talk to management before boarding their buses that day. Management responded by locking out the drivers, who then set up pickets at the bus yards in protest. Bus service resumed the next day as Veolia met with Local 8751 representatives. Meanwhile, the company vindictively suspended five union leaders for having supposedly led a "wildcat strike." Four were then fired: grievance committee chairman Kirschbaum as well as local vice president Steve Gillis, recording secretary Andre Francois and steward Garry Murchison. (For more, see "Boston Job Action: No Reprisals Against School Bus Drivers!" *WV* No. 1033, 1 November 2013.)

The attack against Local 8751 was supported by the Boston city rulers and their kept media, with Democratic mayor Thomas Menino vowing to "make sure this illegal behavior has consequences." Menino especially screamed for the heads of Kirschbaum and Gillis, who are supported by the reformist Workers World Party (WWP), red-baiting them as a "rogue element" and "rabble rousers who cause trouble." These comments were echoed at the time by Martin J. Walsh, a supposed "friend of labor" Democrat who succeeded Menino at City Hall. Such virulent reaction to the mere whiff of labor struggle underscores that the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, represent the interests of the capitalist exploiters. Small wonder Walsh "has done nothing to defend the drivers, despite labor's backing of his election," as the WWP laments in its article "Boston Union Under Siege" (workers.org, 26 February).

Veolia and the city bosses took their vendetta against Kirschbaum one step further last June 30, the day the drivers' contract expired. When union members went to their break room for a contract briefing, management tried to block the doorway with a table. The charges that were fabricated against Kirschbaum were for having allegedly pushed the table against the legs of a manager.

Bus drivers and their allies repeatedly packed the courtroom to demonstrate solidarity, and Local 8751 organized weekly bus yard rallies. The defeat of the frame-up gives impetus to the campaign to reinstate the four fired union leaders, whose case is currently being heard by an arbitrator. To help beat back the union-busters, the labor movement must stand behind the drivers and demand that Kirschbaum, Gillis, Francois and Murchison get their jobs back. ***An injury to one is an injury to all!*** ■

Police Terror and Black Oppression

Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement

The following is a presentation, edited for publication, by Spartacist League spokesman Diana Coleman, who was an activist in the Southern Civil Rights Movement, at a February 21 forum in New York City. Part One appeared in WV *No. 1063 (6 March).*

PART TWO

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was a youth group that emerged out of the lunch counter sit-in movement sweeping Southern black campuses in 1960. It was formed vaguely under the auspices of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Its initial goal was formal, legal equality, and it accepted King's basic pacifist strategy, as you can see with "nonviolent" in its name. To put the strategy in my own words: you have a nonviolent demonstration, get your head beat in by racist Southern sheriffs, scandalize the nation and force the federal government to send in the troops to "protect" black people. SNCC activists started out with the illusion that the U.S. government was on their side.

As Marxists, we know that the bourgeois state is not neutral but an organ for the suppression of the working class and the black masses by the capitalist class. Contrary to liberal myth, federal troops were only brought in when black people began to defend themselves and fight back, from Little Rock in 1957 to Birmingham in 1963. SNCC learned the hard way that the government was not on their side.

It is useful to make a comparison between Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and SNCC. SDS started out as the student group of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). Moribund by 1960, the LID had served as a handmaiden of the U.S. government in the left and labor movement. Populated by what is called "State Department socialists" such as Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington, the LID also counted among its members UAW president Walter Reuther and Bayard Rustin. As the SDS radicalized, the LID was horrified by what it had given birth to, just as the SCLC was horrified by SNCC's leftward motion. As the famous Bob Dylan song "The Times They Are A-Changin'" said: "Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command." There was a political and generational distance.

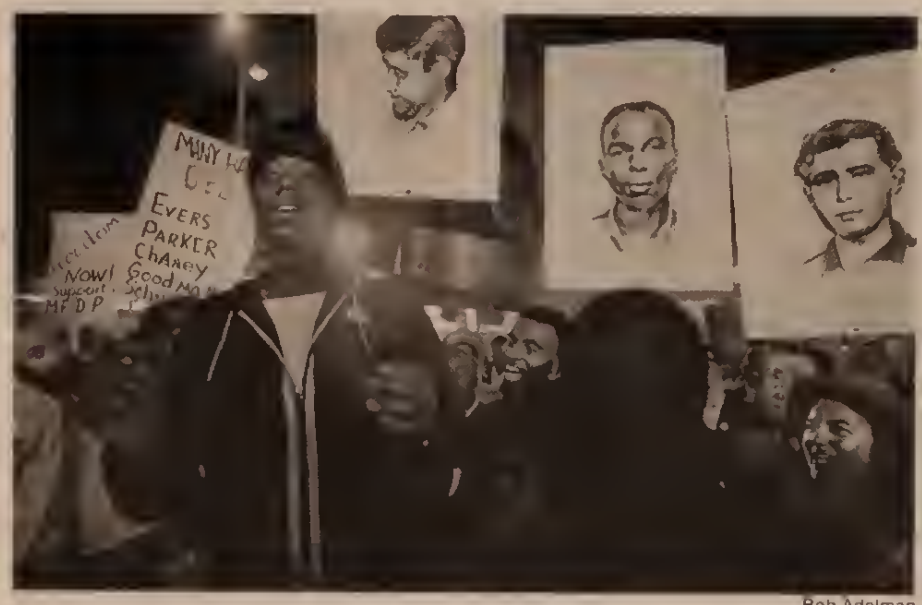
In 1961-62, SNCC organized black people in Albany, Georgia, in a very popular, all-sided attack on segregation. The KKK was mobilizing and things would really heat up. Then Martin Luther King would come in for a weekend and, to the dismay of the SNCC activists, declare a truce to contain the struggle. In the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*, you can hear a leader from SCLC complaining, "We were like firefighters" having to put out the fire. It came to a head when the cops attacked a rally outside a black church and black youth began to fight back however they could, throwing bricks and bottles. King came in again to announce a "day of penance" for the horrible crime of black people actually daring to defend themselves against police brutality. SNCC refused to condemn the action and started referring to King as "De Lawd," as in, "the Lord says this." It was not meant as a compliment. There is quick reference to this in the movie *Selma* but it is never explained [see "*Selma*: The Movie and the Real Story," *WV* No. 1060, 23 January].

SNCC, the Democrats and the Klan

In 1963, at the famous March on Washington, SNCC saw how the whole liberal establishment and the liberal wing of the trade-union bureaucracy were used to keep the lid on the civil rights movement. An early leader of SNCC, James Forman, who is slandered in the movie *Selma* as some sort of petulant jerk feuding with King over turf, commented bitterly in his autobiography, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (1972): "Originally planned as a march for jobs and freedom, with the emphasis on black people and their demands, the March on Washington of 1963 turned into a victory celebration for the Kennedy administration and its supporters."

He went on: "The sellout leadership of the March on Washington was playing patsy with the Kennedy administration as part of the whole liberal-labor politics of Rustin, [the NAACP's Roy] Wilkins, [A. Philip] Randolph, Reuther, King, the Catholic and Protestant hierarchy." The same names always appear. There was a real social-democratic establishment, backed by much of the reformist left, which worked overtime alongside King to keep the movement within the bounds of liberal bourgeois politics.

It was this establishment that put pressure on SNCC chairman John Lewis to tone down his criticism of the Democrats at the march, which he did. The whole thing became a giant liberal prayer fest, channeling the masses into the Democratic Party. Malcolm X forthrightly called it the "Farce on Washington" and offered a blunt rebuttal to King: "I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare." We honor Malcolm X, despite our difference with his nationalism and religiosity. Today is 50 years since his assassination. There was no reconciliation between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, who told the truth about the Democrats.



Bob Adelman

Bettmann

Above: Protesters raise portraits of civil rights martyrs Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman at 1964 Democratic National Convention, where Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party tried and failed to unseat Dixiecrat delegation. Below: January 1964 meeting between Democratic president Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King, with other liberal civil rights leaders.

The U.S. government filmed the March on Washington for foreign consumption to prove how democratic the U.S. was. This was especially important during the Cold War. Racist violence in the South had become an embarrassment overseas, and U.S. imperialism was competing with the Soviet Union for influence in Africa and Asia. You can see a hint of this in *Eyes on the Prize* when one of the Little Rock Nine—black students who integrated the high school—gives an obviously rehearsed speech commenting: "Communists enjoy taking advantage of situations like this [meaning racist violence] to twist the minds of the people of the world." I would bet this was written by the NAACP, which was running the Little Rock case. Seeking to posture as the champions of "democracy," and with Jim Crow segregation outmoded, the U.S. government eventually acquiesced to the demand for legal equality in the South—but not without a lot of struggle.

As Clayborne Carson makes clear in his definitive book on SNCC, *In Struggle* (1981), the Kennedy administration offered civil rights groups, including SNCC, funding to move them away from direct action and to doing voter registration, assuming it would be less explosive and more useful to the Democratic Party. But any move toward the 20th century was explosive in Mississippi. In the summer of 1964, when civil rights workers Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner were killed, SNCC organized 80,000 black people whose right to vote had been denied to sign protest ballots. SNCC took these protest ballots and formed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). With Fannie Lou Hamer, a local woman, at its head, the MFDP delegates tried to get seated at the 1964 Democratic Party National Convention in Atlantic City in place of the all-white Jim Crow delegation from Mississippi.

SNCC and the MFDP were offered a rotten compromise whereby they would get two at-large seats while the entire Dixiecrat delegation would be seated. The usual suspects—King, Reuther, Rustin—were there to try and browbeat SNCC into accepting the compromise. But this time SNCC wasn't going to be intimidated, and they rejected it. James Forman came to the conclusion: "No longer was there any hope, among those who still had it, that the federal government would change the situation in the Deep South."

It was in this charged atmosphere that I went down to Mississippi for the second Freedom Summer. Mississippi was basically a police state. Blacks and whites couldn't drive in the same car for fear of Klan terror. Everywhere along the highways you would see billboards urging you to join the White Citizens' Councils, which were basically Klansmen in suits. We knew it was dangerous and we tried to prepare. For example, in all our cars we disabled the overhead light that comes on when you open the door because it silhouetted you, especially at night, and made you an easy target. For years after, I would always flinch when the car light came on, afraid I was going to be shot.

I want to deal with some of the contradictions I saw in SNCC. I was in Gulfport, Mississippi. We didn't do much voter regis-

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

tration, being somewhat disillusioned with the Democrats after the last year's Democratic National Convention. We decided to concentrate on lunch counter sit-ins. When our integrated group wasn't served at a lunch counter, we organized black youth, mostly teenagers, to demonstrate in front of the store. We were then surrounded by a screaming racist mob. Each day, our forces became bigger, but so did the mobs. The cops would come in their squad cars with Confederate flag license plates, in case you didn't know what side they were on, and laugh at the whole scene.

Luckily, there was a longshore union in Gulfport. It was a segregated black local of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), and I heard there were meetings about us between the union president, the mayor and the police chief. The union president said that if we were arrested or killed, the longshoremen would go on strike and shut down the port. The threat of that kind of political strike was enough. We weren't arrested or killed and the lunch counter began serving blacks. I was impressed with these longshoremen and wish I could have met them. They were the power in the background. I thought that there must be some left group out there who knew how to organize the power of labor in defense of black rights. In the SL's successful anti-Klan united fronts in the 1980s and '90s, I saw that power consciously mobilized in the fight for black freedom.

While I was down in Mississippi, the 1965 Los Angeles Watts upheaval broke out over police brutality. Martin Luther King went to L.A. to try to cool things off and President Lyndon B. Johnson complimented him on his good work. King made clear that "as powerful a police force as possible" should be brought to L.A. to stop the upheaval. This quote by King is nearly impossible to find on the Internet, but you can find it quoted from the *New York Times* in *Spartacist* No. 5 or *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 2. My fellow SNCC activists cursed King's name because it was clear he was calling for pacifism for us but guns for the National Guard to put down black people in the ghettos.

AP

Fannie Lou Hamer speaking to Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party supporters outside Capitol in Washington, D.C., September 1965.

In Mississippi, we heard that our SNCC project might be attacked by the KKK. So the SNCC activists on my project proposed talking to the FBI about it. Being a red-diaper baby, I was horrified. I had seen my mother kick an FBI agent in the shins when he tried to barge into my parents' house. But it was decided that we all had to go together. They assumed the FBI agent would be a Northerner, but he was a real Southerner, with a heavy drawl. When he asked for our address, I was shaking my head and trying to get them to stop, but they didn't listen to me. Soon thereafter, we heard through the grapevine that our house was in danger of being bombed. I wasn't surprised and went around saying various versions of "I told you so" for days.

Such illusions in the FBI were part of the illusions in the federal government. In the 1960s, FBI informers held top-level leadership roles in the Klan. The Klan couldn't move without the FBI knowing it beforehand. The FBI rode with the KKK; they weren't there to disrupt the Klan, they were loyal members of both organizations. This was government policy directed not only by J. Edgar Hoover but also by liberals like Kennedy, and by Johnson.

Liberal Pacifism vs. Armed Self-Defense

As you can read in the document "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" (1966, reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9) the SL stood for armed self-defense in the South. Akinyele Omowale Umoja's new book called *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (2013) makes clear that many SNCC projects couldn't have lasted very long without the armed protection of local black people. Also, a lot of SNCC members themselves were turning to armed self-defense. While people may have heard of Robert F. Williams of North Carolina—the author of *Negroes With Guns* (1962)—or of the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense and Justice, this book gives many more examples.

Danny Lyon

May 1964: National Guard brutalizing SNCC activist during desegregation struggle in Cambridge, Maryland.

That more people were armed corresponds with my own experience in Mississippi. Worried about bomb threats, we moved out of our house for a while. Along with another young white woman, I went to stay with a friendly black family. When night fell, they urged us to sleep in one of the bedrooms, insisting that there would be "no violence." When I looked around the room, every guy there was holding a rifle or a shotgun. I thought, "Well, this is the kind of nonviolence I'm for!"

The white SNCC worker I drove back to California with at the end of the summer had spent his time in the Mississippi Delta, which was more dangerous. The SNCC chapter there had encouraged black people to vote and assured them protection if they did. He spent every night touring around the black section of town in his van with several guys and some shotguns watching for the KKK. I thought it was a very worthy way to have spent the summer. As the SL has always said about gun control, if guns are banned, only the cops and the Klan will have them.

When the question of nonviolence versus the right to armed self-defense was debated, it wasn't really the question, "Do you have the right to defend your family against the Klan?" It was more like, "Were you for armed self-defense for a mass movement embracing millions who were challenging the capitalist state?" It was a debate that revealed your attitude toward "the system" or the "white power structure" or whatever other terms were current for the American capitalist state. "Armed self-defense" was really a way to say that you had the right to not bow down to the white racist government that oppressed black people. Martin Luther King was pledging allegiance to that government. The question of nonviolence versus armed self-defense was the way "reform versus revolution" was posed in the civil rights movement. But it was a very confused debate, with the more radical types tending toward a kind of incoherent black-nationalist separatism.

During these years, the cadres who would later found the SL were the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP had for decades been the Trotskyist party in the U.S. But by the early 1960s, the SWP was losing its revolutionary bearings and was tailing non-proletarian forces. Internationally, this meant uncritically supporting the petty-bourgeois nationalist Castro leadership of the Cuban deformed workers state. Domestically, it meant abstaining from the Southern civil rights struggle and later embracing black nationalism.

The RT fought the party majority's criminal abstentionism and pointed out that young radicals would not come to a Marxist program without the intervention of a revolutionary party. The RT fought inside the SWP for the party to seize the opportunity to recruit black Trotskyist cadre to their ranks. The RT put forward a series of demands linking the fight for black rights to other struggles of the working class and addressing immediate felt needs, such as self-defense guards and union organizing drives throughout the South. Believe me, I would have been so happy to run into a Marxist in Mississippi, but there weren't any. When I came back from Mississippi, I checked out left groups in Berkeley for a number of years until I decided on the SL.

Like in Watts in 1965, ghettos across the country erupted over the next three years, an expression of the frustrated expectations aroused by civil rights agitation. These upheavals marked the beginning of the end of the civil rights period. When it was clear the explosions were part of a pattern and not isolated events, it also became clear that King's "turn the other cheek" liberalism had no relevance to the embittered urban black masses.

In 1966, Stokely Carmichael, newly elected chairman of SNCC, raised the demand for "black power." This call electrified young radicals North and South. We noted at the time that the black power slogan "represents the repudiation of tokenism, liberal tutelage, reliance on the federal government, and the non-violent philosophy of moral suasion" ("Black Power—Class Power," *Spartacist West* Vol. 1, No. 8, 30 September 1966; reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised]). But we also warned in "Black and Red" that the slogan "must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the 'black power' movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party."

Unfortunately, this prognosis was borne out, and not simply in the South. Beginning with Carl Stokes in Cleveland in 1967, black mayors were installed in Northern cities to contain the seething discontent of the ghetto masses. They cynically sold themselves as agents of "change" from within the system. In Detroit, there was Coleman Young and in Chicago, Harold Washington. In 1985, Philadelphia's black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode oversaw the FBI/cop bombing of the MOVE commune, killing eleven people, five of them children. In 1989, David Dinkins, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America led by Michael Harrington, became the first black mayor of New York City. He promised to tame the largely black municipal unions with his pledge to Wall Street, "They'll take it from me."

continued on page 8

John Herman Williams

Spartacist

Left: Robert F. Williams (center), shown with members of Monroe, North Carolina, NAACP in 1957, organized armed self-defense against KKK terror. Right: Spartacist banner at rally in Chicago, 1968.

Civil Rights...

(continued from page 7)

Obama is just the latest in this tradition.

In the late 1960s and '70s, the capitalist rulers, while co-opting a layer of civil rights activists, also waged a war of police terror against black radicals, particularly targeting the Black Panther Party. The Panthers originated at just about the same time that SNCC militants were embracing black power. The Panthers represented the best of a generation of young militants who sought a revolutionary solution to the oppression of black people. But despite their militancy and personal courage, their program of black nationalism was a total dead end, as it always is. Disdainful of the only force for revolutionary change, the multiracial working class, they were isolated and more vulnerable to the FBI's brutal COINTELPRO vendetta. Within a few years, some Panthers like Bobby Seale would run for office in the Democratic Party. Others, like former Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class war prisoner, still languish in jail for crimes they did not commit.

The Myth of King's Radicalism

In the mid to late '60s, I was not interested in Martin Luther King's pacifist liberalism any more than I was interested in my parents' "old school" CP reformism. The idea that King was becoming some sort of revolutionary never crossed my mind. But this is now common coin among leftists and young radicals. For example, Ferguson Action, an organization anchoring the national Black Lives Matter movement, put out the call to "reclaim" Martin Luther King this year, stating: "Martin Luther King Jr.'s life's work was the elevation, honoring, and defense of Black Lives.... This movement was built on a bold vision that was radical, principled, and uncompromising.... Unfortunately, Dr. King's legacy has been clouded by efforts to soften, sanitize, and commercialize it."

Or as the reformist Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), somewhat more cynically, says in a recent forum announcement: they will "cover Dr. Martin Luther King's criticism of the U.S. economic system, his dedication to ending poverty, his opposition to the Vietnam War, and his view that mass social movements were needed to change society" and, further, "how his true legacy can help guide the current movement against racist police terror." You can find similar quotes from the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Workers World and others.

Martin Luther King was a smart, savvy politician. Realizing that he was losing touch with young radicals, black and white, he adjusted his rhetoric, but he didn't change his politics. In Memphis in 1968, he urged restraint and pacifism during the sanitation workers strike. Speaking about the war in Vietnam one year earlier, he explained that when he tried to teach nonviolence, angry black youth kept asking, "What about Vietnam?" Being no fool, King figured he better comment. When he said these were "revolutionary times" during his speech at Riverside Church in New York City, he meant:

> "These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not engage in a negative anticommunism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy, realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice, which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.... This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against communism."

This was quite different from the Panthers or my New Left friends and I, who were chanting for the Vietnamese Communists of the National Liberation Front: "Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh, the NLF is going to win!" Of course, I had a lot to learn about Stalinism, but I knew I was for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. The SL's slogan, "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" which actually contains an implicit criticism of the nationalism and betrayals of Vietnamese Stalinism, helped recruit young people who were *for* communism, not those trying to stop its spread.

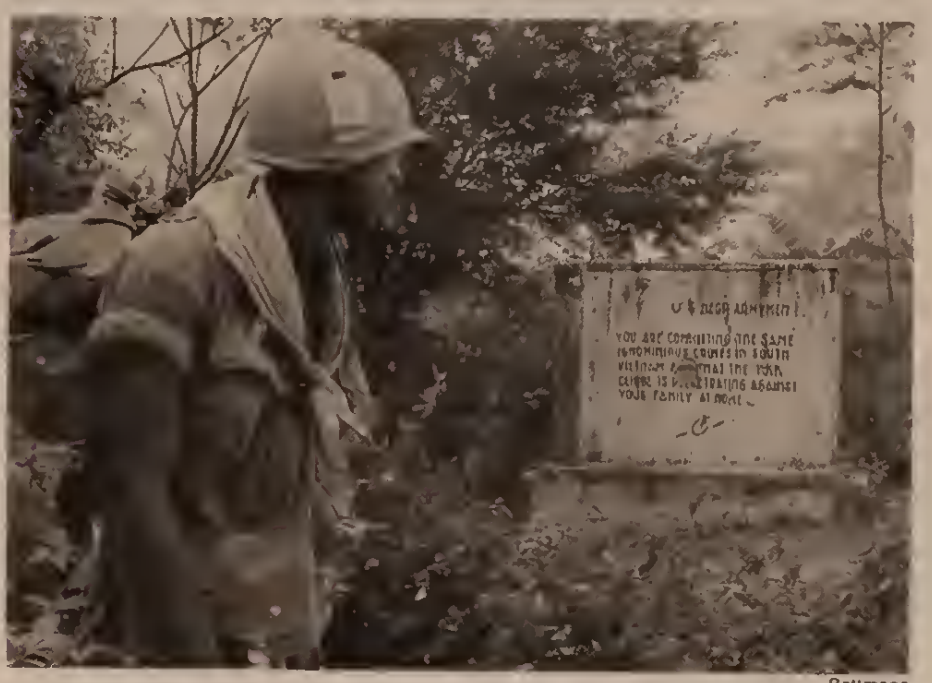
It is important to understand that in the late 1960s and early '70s, a layer of the American bourgeoisie was beginning to worry about losing the war in Vietnam, especially when the real enemy was the Soviet Union. They thought it was time to cut their losses, that's all. Martin Luther King's position wasn't any more "revolutionary" than the many Democratic Party politicians who spoke at the antiwar rallies trying to woo young people back to working within the system. The SWP, by this time totally reformist, did yeoman's work for the bourgeoisie organizing these rallies as giant platforms for the Democrats.

A Class-Struggle Perspective

Formal, legal inequality in the South was susceptible to reform. But getting rid of the economic and social reality that is black oppression in America—from de facto segregation and poverty to police brutality—is not subject to reform because it is integral to the capitalist system. Many young people today are unimpressed with Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson and rightly so. But so many of the demands of Black Lives Matter and the rest are taken from the same liberal playbook.

The essence of the capitalist state is armed bodies of men—cops, prisons, courts, National Guard and army—used by the ruling class to suppress the working class. At a recent anti-police brutality event here in New York City called "The Gathering," which the ISO, PSL and others were involved in, the message was "police accountability." But the cops are not accountable to us; they work for the bourgeoisie. Their role is to protect capitalist private property and part of their job is to make it clear that black people are simply second-class citizens. Ferguson Action's national demands include demilitarizing law enforcement. True, the cops have all this intimidating military hardware, but let's not believe there was a "golden era" when the cops only did foot patrols. Then and now, most black and Latino youth are killed the old-fashioned way with billy clubs, handguns and shotguns.

All the other ways of "reforming" the police are also self-defeating illusions.



Bettmann

Vietnamese National Liberation Front reached out to black GIs. Message reads, "U.S. Negro Armymen: You Are Committing the Same Ignominious Crimes in South Vietnam That the KKK Clique Is Perpetrating Against Your Family at Home."

Civilian review boards, which have been around at least since the '60s, have changed nothing. Body cameras? Well, Eric Garner's killing was taped, and what difference did that make? Then there are federal investigations. The Feds just put out the word that no charges would be brought against Darren Wilson, the cop who killed Michael Brown. The FBI found "no evidence" that Brown's civil rights had been violated. How much more violated could they have been? Other demands raised at the demos in Ferguson and elsewhere have included special prosecutors, investigations by [Attorney General Eric] Holder and reviews by Obama of police weaponry and training.

But when the Feds get involved, it is to defuse anger over police atrocities and prevent a social explosion. The function of the Department of Justice—which includes the FBI and the Bureau of Prisons—is to spy on political activists, enforce the racist "war on drugs," victimize militant trade unionists and run prisons. Calling on the top overseer of the whole plantation to protect black people from his local subordinates is like asking the fox to guard the henhouse. We seek to win militant youth and workers away from the dead end of pressure politics to a revolutionary perspective. All the "direct action" and militant tactics in the service of the same old pressure politics will not change this system. Capitalism must be overturned.

Michael Brown's mother is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, and many trade unionists individually participated in the Ferguson protests and other protests. Fast-food workers in the St. Louis area, demonstrating for $15 an hour, held die-ins and moments of silence for Michael Brown, as did the union demonstrators at the Walmart Black Friday boycott in Long Beach, California, that I went to. In an inchoate way, these workers recognize that the fights for labor rights and for black rights go forward together or fall back separately.

However, the strategies on offer from the trade-union bureaucracy are totally bankrupt. The conservative bureaucrats atop the labor movement have sapped the strength of the unions by rolling over in the face of all-out union busting, while barely lifting a finger in defense of minorities. With their boycotts, mini-rallies, civil disobedience photo ops and electoral pressure on the Democrats, the labor misleaders look to the very forces—the president, Congress, state legislatures—that have presided over the attacks on workers. The whole perspective of the labor tops is predicated on the lie that the working class and the owners of industry share a common interest in the profitability of American capitalism. And by refusing to actively fight against anti-black racism, repression and anti-immigrant bigotry, the labor misleaders have criminally aided the rulers in weakening and dividing the working class.

A telling point is how the current sellout bureaucrats welcome and organize police into unions. Back in the days of the struggles that built the industrial unions, the cops weren't seen as "brothers" for obvious reasons: they were beating, shooting and killing strikers. That the trade-union misleaders embrace the bosses' thugs is one of the more grotesque examples of their traitorous role as the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.

The key to unlocking the power of labor is the fight for a class-struggle leadership and the independent political mobilization of the working class. What is needed is the kind of struggle that forged the unions in the first place—mass picketing, hot cargoing and sympathy strikes. As my mother always used to tell me: "The best things in life are illegal, immoral or fattening." So true! And when it comes to class struggle, the most effective tools are all illegal. But why is that surprising? The entire legal edifice of this country has always buttressed the rule of the property owners.

In conclusion, class struggle is inevitable, as capitalism breeds it. What is not inevitable is who will win. For the working class to seize power from the hands of its oppressors and hold onto it requires the leadership of a revolutionary workers party whose purpose is not only to improve the present conditions of the working class and the oppressed, but to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery. As we wrote in "Black and Red": "To the extent that the black workers, the most militant in the U.S. working class, become infused with a revolutionary socialist perspective, and thereby become able to provide leadership to the class as a whole, they play a vital role in the success of the world revolution." Only then, when the workers rule, can the wealth produced by their labor be used for the benefit of all.

* * *

During the discussion at the forum, an audience member raised a question about women in the civil rights movement and the struggle for women's liberation. We print below, edited for publication, Diana's response, as well as her summary remarks.

Stokely Carmichael's famous statement that the position of women in the movement "is prone" captured the backwardness of SNCC on the woman question. You could see this backwardness elsewhere in the civil rights movement. For example, there was only one token woman speaker at the March on Washington. They had women singers (I think one was Mahalia Jackson), but Rosa Parks was not invited to speak. In the case of the Black Panthers or the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, again you quite often saw extreme male chauvinism; black nationalism and male chauvinism go together in many ways.

But the answer is ***not*** feminism, which was my initial response. I was involved in women's liberation stuff, and it was feminist. It was sectoralist—every group

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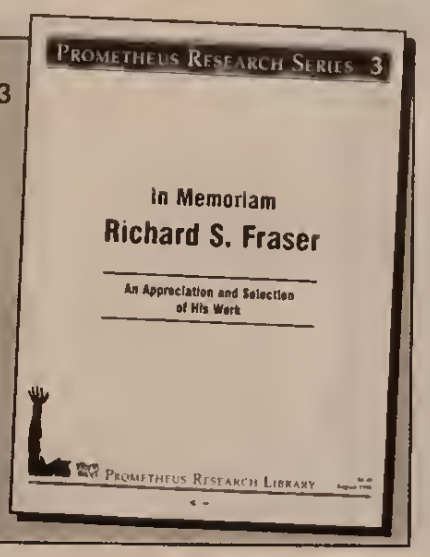

LAPD...

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"broken windows," cracking down hard on petty violations supposedly prevents more serious crimes. In NYC, this policy resulted in the death last July of Eric Garner, strangled by cops for selling loose cigarettes.

As indicated by its original name, "Homeless Reduction Strategy," the real purpose of SCI is to clear the homeless out of Skid Row to further the gentrification that began there in the 2000s. This has meant criminalizing people simply for being without a home. UCLA law professor Gary Blasi reported in 2011 that about 85 percent of citations on Skid Row "were for things like sitting on the sidewalk, for which you could actually be arrested, or dropping a cigarette ash—that was littering—or not quite making it across the street before the 'Don't Walk' sign went on. That was 1,000 citations a month in those categories."

Safer Cities poured additional undercover officers and 50 new beat cops (not to mention the parallel increase in private security guards) into an area of around 50 city blocks! The police initially cited homeless people for camping and confiscated their meager belongings if they left them to use a restroom or to visit a soup kitchen. After the American Civil Liberties Union won a lawsuit against the anti-camping ordinance, the city offered a "compromise," agreeing to stop kicking the homeless off the sidewalk between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Laws against the homeless have a long history in capitalist America, one bound up with the effort to enforce the subjugation of black people. Vagrancy laws were expanded after the Civil War in order to help bind former slaves to the plantations as part of a new system of labor discipline. Following the social upheavals of the civil rights movement, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down vagrancy laws in 1972, but they have since been resurrected under other guises—the average California city today has nine separate anti-homeless laws, while L.A. and San Francisco each has 23.

Skid Row: Disgusting Reality of Capitalist Decay

Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez captured the reality of Skid Row: "It's as if there's been a war or natural disaster, and the wounded, shellshocked and penniless have been herded into a dystopian holding pen where they have nothing left but a small measure of their self-respect, plenty of company and countless temptations to sink even lower." Up to 5,000 people, predominantly black and male, eke out an existence on Skid Row. They make up fully 10 percent of the population of downtown L.A., a higher concentration of homeless people than anywhere else in the country.

Getty

Skid Row, Los Angeles, 2013.

In L.A. County as a whole, 91,000 people are homeless on any given night, by some accounts more than in any other American metropolitan area. Notwithstanding the common perception of Southern California weather, the elements take a toll on those living on the sidewalks, and many suffer from diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis. As is typical in racist capitalist America, half the L.A. County homeless population is black, although black people comprise only 9 percent of the county's overall population.

Skid Row is what it is by design. While the neighborhood has been around since the late 19th century, Skid Row was at first largely a red-light district and home to day laborers, only taking on its modern incarnation in the 1970s. Since L.A. has always been decentralized, and anyone who had money avoided downtown, black Democratic mayor Tom Bradley purposely concentrated the homeless there, out of sight. As Martha Burt, an Urban Institute researcher into U.S. homeless communities, explained: "This doesn't mean there was any actual increase in services or in public money going into assist anybody who was being herded into that area.... It just means that whatever was left by way of services was highly concentrated in a relatively few blocks of downtown." In a practice termed "patient dumping," hospitals have released homeless and mentally disabled people directly onto the streets of Skid Row.

Now that expensive lofts and chichi eating establishments are sprouting up downtown, the capitalist rulers want to drive the homeless somewhere else. This campaign has not gone unchallenged. Monthly walking tours of Skid Row run by local businesses to promote the gentrification of the area have been met with raucous protests by the L.A. Community Action Network and other activists. In 2011, the cops arrested one such protester for "disturbing" the walk and the next year charged another for assault and battery with an airhorn. (The latter was acquitted at trial and last week a court ruled the former should never have been arrested.)

Like more than a quarter of homeless people, Keunang needed treatment for mental illness. But America's capitalist rulers have long made it clear that they will not pay for services for the poor, let alone the homeless. Mental health facilities have closed and any extension of those that remain has run up against resistance. When a mental health clinic near where Keunang was killed tried to expand, opposition by residents of lofts in the same building quashed the attempt. What the capitalists do offer is prison: L.A. County jail system is in effect the largest psychiatric ward in the U.S.

Homelessness and the Capitalist System

The scourge of homelessness is firmly rooted in the normal functioning of the capitalist system. Capitalism maintains a reserve body of unemployed to keep downward pressure on wages. A one-sided class war against the working class in recent decades has further slashed jobs and pay. Plenty of workers struggle to make ends meet and are at the complete mercy of the banks, living in fear that they are only one paycheck away from being thrown out on the street.

In order to fight the immiseration of workers and the degradation of the chronically unemployed, the labor movement must be mobilized in struggle at the head of all the oppressed. What's urgently needed is a class-struggle fight for jobs for all. Equally urgent is the need for quality medical care, free at the point of delivery, as well as a massive program of public works—high-quality integrated housing, schools, libraries and hospitals for working people and the poor.

But providing these burning necessities is incompatible with the capitalist profit system. As Friedrich Engels, who with Karl Marx was a pioneer of modern communism, wrote well over a century ago in *The Housing Question* (1872): "As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labour by the working class itself."

Crucial to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist vanguard party, the necessary instrument to bring the working class to power. In just one night, a revolutionary workers government would requisition living space from fancy hotels and the mansions of the rich—put the homeless in the Wilshire Grand Hotel, Beverly Hills and the Pacific Palisades! By ripping the productive forces out of the hands of the capitalist parasites and establishing a planned, centralized economy that serves the interests of society as a whole, the victorious working class will be able to provide a decent life for all. ■

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should organize its own people. Whites organize whites, women organize women and blacks organize blacks.

I had to face this sectoralism head-on when my friends and I got industrial jobs. It was after the May-June 1968 events in France when the New Left realized there was a working class out there. In the factory where I was working, there were men, women, blacks and whites. Those were more radical times: guys would come up to me and say, "I hear you are some kind of leftist." And my feminist friends would say, "Don't talk to them, you're just there to organize women." And I would say, "Jeez, that doesn't seem like a very good idea." Then we were going to have a women's contingent at an antiwar demo, and my feminist friends said, "Just invite the white women, because blacks ought to organize blacks." I said, "First of all, there are no black organizers in my factory so that's not going to work and, anyhow, hell will freeze over before I only invite whites."

We learned that the industrial working class is the one place in the U.S. where you see blacks, whites, Latinos, Asians, men and women. And that you actually had to fight hard to organize the working class. I realized that the feminist movement provided no way forward. I was at this feminist meeting with my friends from the East Oakland Women's Collective, and these feminists said to us, "Communism and feminism are incompatible." And I said, "You're right, I'm out of here."

* * *

When I was in Mississippi in the summer of 1965, my SNCC collective was going to have a community meeting at a church. I mentioned that one of the things we should bring up at the meeting was this new thing called the war in Vietnam. In the discussion about my proposal, everybody shot it down. I was told that SNCC was conducting a single-issue campaign and that we weren't going to get into other stuff. Some in the group argued that black people, especially in the South, were very patriotic and a lot of times went into the military and therefore would not appreciate us raising opposition to the war. So I didn't bring it up.

In the years that followed, I often thought back on this incident. I saw more and more blacks coming back from the war and going to demonstrations like Stop the Draft Week in Oakland. I saw Muhammad Ali declare: No Viet Cong ever called me the "N" word. I saw people like Geronimo Pratt coming back from Vietnam and joining the Black Panthers. It was obvious that there was indeed a relationship between black oppression here and U.S. imperialism's wars abroad, and that blacks were often in the forefront of opposing U.S. imperialist rampages. So I was sorry that I hadn't brought it up in Mississippi in 1965.

The U.S. tends to have long periods in which not much happens and then there is fairly explosive struggle, often more militant than in European countries where the working class has a reformist, social-democratic leadership. When class and social struggle do break out, what matters is whether there is a revolutionary party that has learned the programmatic and historic lessons of previous class battles and is able to lead those struggles forward. Not just to win some immediate demands, but to actually lead the working class to take state power here in the belly of the beast. That's what the International Communist League and the SL stand for. ■

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South Africa...

(continued from page 12)

up in opposition to the attacks against immigrants, including by confronting the youth who were looting. What these conditions cry out for is the mobilisation of the powerful trade unions in defence of the immigrants and to unite all the oppressed in the struggle for jobs and quality housing for all. COSATU issued a statement against the looting, but this statement called on the very same police that were taking part in the attacks against the immigrants to act evenhandedly.

Like their ANC alliance partners, the COSATU bureaucrats use anti-immigrant chauvinism to deflect mass anger and also to cover up for their own role in selling out working-class struggles. For example, in a series of tweets in December 2014, COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, while claiming to "condemn xenophobia," complained that "the current displacement of Africans even in spaza shops mainly by guys from [the] East is not politically sustainable," making blanket charges of "smuggling" against Chinese shop-owners. This chauvinism was echoed by ANC minister of water and sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, who in January railed on Facebook about a "takeover" of township spaza shops by "people of Somali or Pakistani origin," which she called "a recipe for disaster" that she would raise with the authorities. COSATU is an integral part of the South African capitalist government through its ANC/SACP/COSATU nationalist popular front. ***Break with the bourgeais Tripartite Alliance! Far the class independence af the praletariat from all baurgeais parties!***

A large percentage of workers in mining and other industries in South Africa come from neighbouring countries and have been an integral part in building the economy and the labour movement. It is in the vital interests of the entire workers movement to defend immigrants, both as a measure of self defence and to maintain the integrity of the working class movement. Immigrants must be organised into trade unions with full rights, pay and benefits. This requires fighting for ***full citizenship rights*** for all immigrants and against deportations by a Leninist vanguard party fighting as a tribune of the people.

Attacks on foreign-owned shops have become a feature in many of the service delivery protests in black townships, which are mainly composed of unemployed, desperate youth, would-be petty proprietors, and others with little to no direct relationship to the means of production. Youth unemployment in particular is dire, with recent statistics indicating that 71 percent of all unemployed are between the ages of 15 and 29. General unemployment amongst the blacks is in the region of 40 percent. What's needed is the mobilisation of the township poor behind the social power of the trade unions. A class-struggle perspective would mean linking the fight to defend immigrants to a fight for ***jabs for all*** to deal with the astronomical levels of unemployment through a shortened workweek with no loss in pay and massive public works programmes to provide roads, housing and other desperately needed services for the masses.

Adequate housing for millions in the townships and squatter camps, electricity and clean water for the entire population, free, quality education and healthcare for all and all the other desperately needed measures—to achieve these requires the socialist transformation of society. The industrial and mining proletariat has the power and class interests to unite all of the oppressed in a determined struggle for a revolutionary workers government.

AP photos

Relentless anti-immigrant harassment under ANC government. Left: Cop menaces immigrants in Johannesburg, 2008. Right: Soldiers demand immigrants' documents in Diepsloot township, 2010.

Widening Cracks in the "Rainbow Nation" Myth

Advanced workers and revolutionary-minded youth need to understand that the scapegoating of immigrants is just one aspect of the capitalist rulers' racist "divide-and-rule" schemes that threaten much broader sections of the working masses. During the 2008 anti-immigrant attacks some Venda, Shangaan and Xhosa-speaking South Africans were also victims of the violence. The fact of the matter is that little has changed in the "new" South Africa. The white bourgeoisie retains an iron grip on the productive forces of the country—the mines, factories, banks and land—while subcontracting the administration of the bourgeois state to the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance. These unchanged apartheid-era economic and social conditions allow the white minority to continue enjoying First World living standards while the black masses are trapped in Third World poverty.

Under such conditions and a declining capitalist economy, the frustrations of the masses have manifested themselves in growing divisions along tribal, ethnic and racial lines. For example, in recent months legitimate grievances against lack of basic services in Malamulele, Limpopo Province, have been diverted into tribal tensions between the Tsonga and the Venda. Early last year, disgruntled black petty bourgeois mobs in KwaZulu-Natal (including supporters of the bourgeois ANC and EFF [Economic Freedom Fighters]) were involved in war-like racist mobilisations against Indian counterparts they accused of getting better tender deals. Meanwhile, reports of white racists' attacks on blacks are on the increase. All these instances provide a damning verdict on the bankruptcy of the "rainbow nation" myth that somehow the racial, tribal and other divisions inherited from apartheid could be overcome while leaving intact the capitalist system and attendant social structure.

We characterised the deal [ending apartheid] between the ANC/SACP/COSATU Tripartite Alliance and the white minority rulers as a betrayal of the national struggle for black liberation. Eighteen years ago we wrote that:

> "Widespread expectations for better housing and jobs cannot be met; even simple democratic demands such as the right to an education for all children or the right of women to birth control and abortion are denied to the overwhelming majority by social inequality and lack of facilities. If the masses' frustration does not find expression along *class* lines it will fuel and embitter every other kind of division."
>
> —*The Fight for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left*, April 1997

The ANC-led nationalist movement cannot bring social progress to the non-white masses because it is committed to maintaining South African capitalism. It is precisely for this reason that the divide-and-rule practices inherited from British imperialism still exist today. They can only be ended when the national question is transcended and the enormous wealth is taken away from the white capitalist class and their black junior partners. The way out of this dilemma is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party that fights for a workers revolution centred on the black majority and whose ranks must be drawn from the multiracial and ethnically diverse South African society.

Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

Emphasising the interrelationship between the fight for working-class power and for national liberation of the oppressed majority, we call for a black-centred workers government. This slogan is aimed at bringing the *class* principle to the fore, based on the Leninist understanding that the struggle for national liberation, using the methods of class struggle, can be a powerful motor force for socialist revolution in South Africa. It is based on a recognition of the overwhelming weight of the national/racial question in this country, where the majority of the African people are oppressed by the privileged white minority. Our call for a black-centred workers government seeks to address the felt burning needs of the black masses for genuine national emancipation and equality, and to highlight the fact that the proletarian revolution is very much the supreme act of national liberation.

Our call also draws a line against those who refuse to recognise or are indifferent to the fact that the racial hierarchy established under British colonial rule and perfected under apartheid—with whites on top, followed by Indians, coloureds [mixed race, partly of Malay origin], and blacks at the rock bottom—continues to define the social reality of neo-apartheid capitalism. Most of the pseudo-socialist left embraces nationalist fictions like the "rainbow nation" or "nonracialism" in one form or another, which deny or downplay the continued existence of dramatic divisions along colour, national and tribal lines among the oppressed nonwhite masses. In practice, these fictions serve to prettify the racist reality of neo-apartheid capitalist rule and provide a cover for the ANC, DA and other bourgeois forces to promote vicious divide-and-rule.

A distinct phenomenon of South African capitalism is the strong overlap between racial and class oppression. While we support the struggle for national emancipation, we are irreconcilably opposed to all nationalist ideology. Historically, the depth of black national oppression was characterised by the absence of a black property-owning class, thus strengthening the false consciousness that all blacks share the same interests which stand above class divisions. While the objective reality has changed under neo-apartheid, with political power being given to a black elite and the development of a relatively tiny black bourgeoisie that act mainly as black front men for the still dominantly white capitalist class, the ideological grip of nationalism remains deep amongst the working class and the oppressed and acts as a major obstacle towards the development of class consciousness.

The ANC/Alliance nationalists, as the new overseers of racist South African capitalism, have relied on the same "divide-and-rule" strategy as their white predecessors, pitting different sections of the oppressed against each other. The brutal oppression and vicious scapegoating of immigrants from Africa and Asia is one of the clearest examples of the reactionary face of black nationalism.

A black-centred workers government would have to demonstrate in words and deeds that it is not a new black nationalism in a disguised form. A key task of such a government would be to transcend the national, racial and tribal divisions by fighting for and ensuring democratic rights and national equality of all the peoples of South Africa. It is on this basis that we emphasise the *inclusive* nature of this slogan: a black-centred workers government would include full democratic rights and an important role for the coloured and Indian toilers, as well as those whites who would accept a government based centrally on the black working class. South Africa conforms in an exceptionally clear way to Trotsky's conception of permanent revolution which posits that national liberation and social and economic modernisation in colonial and semi-colonial countries can be achieved only through proletarian revolution.

We do not regard as sacrosanct the colonialist-drawn borders between African countries that have no correspondence with tribal or ethnic groupings. We fight for a socialist federation of Southern Africa where there will be equal rights for all the myriad peoples of the region. The South African proletariat, which is exploited by the capitalist class whose holdings extend throughout Southern Africa, has the social power that is key to liberating not only the downtrodden masses in this country, but those of the entire region groaning under neocolonial misery. Immigrants from neighbouring countries working and/or staying in South Africa will act as a human bridge connecting the proletarian revolution here to revolutions throughout the region. Socialist revolution and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie can lay the material foundations for social and economic progress and genuine equality. But such a perspective can only be realised through the extension of the socialist revolution to the most advanced imperialist countries and the establishment of a collectivised, planned, socialist world economy. This is the revolutionary Trotskyist programme of Spartacist/South Africa. ■

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Cop Terror...

(continued from page 1)

Madison, Wisconsin, who viewed himself as biracial, and Anthony Hill, a mentally ill Air Force veteran gunned down outside Atlanta, Georgia.

Each new killing by the police, as usual, comes with an official stamp of approval. The city of Cleveland pointed the finger at 12-year-old Tamir Rice for failing to "avoid" being blown away, while a Justice Department investigation gave a free pass to Michael Brown's killer, Darren Wilson. Such is par for the course in, to use Obama's phrase, "fair America," where a filthy rich elite lord it over working people, the black masses and the rest of the downtrodden. Indeed, terrorizing the poor and oppressed, as well as violently suppressing workers struggle and social protest, is what the capitalist rulers pay the cops to do. The thugs in blue have not resorted to planting "throwaway guns" on these victims; the law sanctions deadly force by police against any threat they perceive—and in this racist society black youth are widely perceived, especially by the cops, as lawbreakers. Harassment, or worse, for driving/walking/breathing while black is a daily reality.

Ferguson's black residents and anti-police brutality activists were back in the crosshairs after two cops standing guard were shot and wounded during a protest outside police headquarters the night of March 11. City authorities and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder blamed protesters for the "ambush," paving the way for heightened repression as county and state police again descended on the small community. After a huge manhunt, a 20-year-old black man was arrested. Whatever happened the night of the protest, the ongoing violence-baiting of protesters is a clear message: they deserve whatever they get from the marauding cops.

Some observers have found solace in the Feds' second Ferguson report, which knocked the aggressive ticketing and other "unconstitutional" practices of its police as well as their pervasive harassment of black people. In an online *Atlantic* article (5 March), black journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates lauds the "due process" extended to Wilson while remarking: "The lack of faith among black people in Ferguson's governance, or in America's governance, is not something that should be bragged about. One cannot feel good about living under gangsters, and that is the reality of Ferguson right now."

Since the report was released, several local officials, including the widely reviled police chief, have submitted their resignations. We say good riddance. But changing who fills these positions does nothing to address the material reality of racist oppression in this country or the cop terror that is one of its starkest expressions. The aim of the federal investigation, as always in such cases, was never to rein in the police, but to neutralize fury over their crimes, thwart unrest and paint a gloss on the "justice" system. In fact, Ferguson is hardly the worst case, as even the liberal bourgeoisie's main mouthpiece, the *New York Times*, felt compelled to document in the article "Ferguson Became a Symbol, but Bias Knows No Border" (7 March).

As many of those around the Black Lives Matter movement proclaim, state violence is endemic to a society that has written off the lives of black ghetto youth, who are deemed unworthy of education and cast aside into the ranks of the jobless and/or locked up. But in faulting a "broken system," these activists are criticizing social and legal institutions, not the economic foundations on which those institutions stand. The entrenched oppression of black people in this country, a legacy of chattel slavery, is rooted in the capitalist profit system. Under capitalism, a handful of exploiters who own industry, the banks and large farms—that is, the capitalist class—amass huge wealth off the labor of the working class. The police, as the frontline defense of that system, are at the core of the repressive capitalist state machinery, along with the courts and prisons. This system cannot be fixed by tweaking laws or cleaning out corruption, which is the content of the demands of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Black people are an integral part of American class society while at the same time forcibly segregated at its bottom as a race-color caste. Bearing the brunt of cutbacks and job losses, they are the last hired (if at all) and first fired. Even so, black workers continue to form a strategic core of the multiracial working class—the only force, based on its role in production, with the social power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system, paving the way for black liberation in an egalitarian socialist society.

The Illusion of Police Accountability

On March 11, over a thousand people marched in Madison to demand justice for Tony Robinson, who was shot in the head by a cop in his own apartment in this mostly white college town. One of the protest organizers was the Young Gifted and Black Coalition (YGBC), which formed after the killing of Michael Brown. In January correspondence with the Madison police chief, the YGBC sought "open and honest dialogue" with the city's top cop, offering specific recommendations for reforming local law enforcement and the county jail. Politically linking arms with the YGBC, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) posted this correspondence approvingly on its website with the headline: "Time to Hold the Police Accountable" (socialistworker.org, 22 January).

The YGBC imbibes in the widespread illusion, peddled by the ISO, that the police can be made answerable to the public. The letter calls on the Madison Police Department to "address racial disparities," which is like imploring a viper to ease up on its bite. In fact, the capitalist state apparatus can never be made to "protect and serve" the interests of workers and minorities.

The cops are not "accountable" to anyone other than to the capitalist masters they serve. Madison is proof positive. A petri dish for police reform schemes, the city is known as a liberal haven in a state with a long history of supposedly progressive police chiefs. Still, as the YGBC itself attests, black people are arrested and incarcerated there at much higher rates than whites. Matters will not change with more diversity training and more black cops, who are no less devoted to the job than their white counterparts. A black officer was involved in killing Charly Leundeu Keunang in Los Angeles earlier this month (see article on page 1).

The YGBC also embraces "the values of community control and self-determination." The black nationalists who raised "community control" in the late 1960s were drawn from a layer of the black petty bourgeoisie seeking its own piece of the pie by making a virtue of the ingrained segregation that was seen as unchangeable. They also often opposed organized labor. The actual content of the "community control" slogan was an appeal for more black Democratic Party politicians, cops, judges and administrators. Since then, black mayors have been installed in one major city after another to help contain the discontent of the black masses while presiding over cop terror and pushing through attacks on labor and social programs.

Cops Are Not Workers

Drawing a link between the interests of the besieged black masses and those of the working class does not take a Marxist analysis. In an article titled "Black Lives Matter to Labor" (27 February), Terry Melvin, secretary-treasurer of the New York State AFL-CIO and president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, observes how "the fate of Black workers is the fate of American workers," with black workers playing a central role in the unions. So why hasn't anti-black repression been met with massive, militant protest by organized labor,

WV Photo

March 11: Spartacists at protest in Madison.

with its ability to bring production to a halt and stop the flow of profits?

Melvin's conclusion that black lives matter "because the American Dream matters" is indicative. This patriotic myth holds that working people can "make it" if they work hard to help maximize the bosses' profits. The union bureaucracy, of which Melvin is a part, has long shackled the workers to their class enemies, largely through support to the capitalist Democratic Party, falsely portrayed as a friend of labor and black people. The "American Dream" is in fact a nightmare for the untold millions who daily scramble to get by.

Emblematic of the labor tops' allegiance to the capitalist system is their opening of the unions' doors to the police and security guards. Of the 16 million people covered by a union contract today, around 7 percent are in so-called "protective service occupations." This embrace of the racist killer cops and strikebreakers as class brothers and sisters is just one more noose around the neck of organized labor, further sapping the fighting strength of the unions. Cops, prison guards and security guards have no place in the union movement.

Separate associations representing cops and prison guards, referred to by the misnomer "unions," have grown in recent years, right along with mass incarceration. Above and beyond defending the capitalists' hired guns, the role of these organizations is to advance an agenda of more weapons, manpower and leeway for cop savagery. Witness the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association in New York City, which seized on the killing of two Brooklyn cops last year to spin a tale of a "war on police" in order to better squelch protest. In Albuquerque, New Mexico—with one of the country's highest rates of fatal shootings by cops, eight times that of the NYPD—the police fraternity routinely has rewarded trigger-happy cops with $500 to help them "decompress" after they shoot someone.

Pseudo-Marxist groups like Socialist Alternative (SAlt) regurgitate the union bureaucracy's filth that cops are "fellow workers." Such a view makes a mockery of the entire history of workers struggle. When miners used to sing the old labor anthem "Which Side Are You On?" they were not addressing the strikebreaking cops or Pinkertons.

In documents posted on SAlt's website under the title "Marxism and the State: An Exchange" from a 2006 debate within their British affiliate, the Socialist Party, these reformists' longstanding position that cops are "workers in uniform" is given a theoretical wrapping. The reader is told that "a revolutionary policy" involves supporting the police ranks' "democratic rights, including the right to organise in a trade union." SAlt goes on to say that unionizing the cops will create "more favourable conditions of struggle for the working class" by bringing them closer to the workers movement (yes, close enough to land a baton). The mere fact that these thugs are paid for their dirty work does not make them workers. If reformists like SAlt truly had the courage of their convictions, they should split off from the protests, go inside police stations—say in Ferguson, for example—and appeal for solidarity from these agents of state repression. Then see what happens.

For a Proletarian Orientation

Notably, in Madison the March 11 march and rally sparked by Tony Robinson's killing was appended to a protest in opposition to an anti-union "right to work" bill signed two days earlier by Wisconsin governor Scott Walker. Some protesters also expressed sympathy with fast-food workers engaged in the "Fight for $15" campaign to raise the minimum wage and win union recognition, including by marching to a Burger King and a Papa John's after rallying at the Department of Corrections.

The cause of these heavily black, immigrant and female workers has become a focal point for the struggle against poverty wages and tenuous employment, with the campaign attracting fast-food workers who want to make a fight of it. But labor officials like those of the SEIU service workers union use the "15" rhetoric to pressure the Democratic Party into supporting minimum wage increases as a ***substitute*** for waging a class-struggle fight to obtain increased pay from the bosses. Ditto the reformists of SAlt, who in tailing behind the union bureaucracy have focused their efforts on legislative wheeling and dealing and petitioning to raise the minimum wage.

As we wrote in "Fight Poverty Wages Through Class Struggle!" (*WV* No. 1052, 19 September 2014), "The organization of the atomized fast-food workforce poses the need to mobilize the power of unionized workers along the supply lines of the fast-food chains, where once-strong union concentrations, such as in trucking and meatpacking, have been eroded by the craven policies of the union bureaucrats. A hard struggle to organize fast-food workers would rapidly fuel a resurgence of union strength in those industries."

The millennials of today's Black Lives Matter protests have not witnessed much by way of strike action. Many activists wrongly associate the working class as a whole with the sellout leaders atop the unions. What is necessary to transform the unions into battalions of class struggle and champions of the oppressed is a new labor leadership willing to fight it out class against class.

There is plenty of raw anger among working people over smaller paychecks, among black youth over cop terror, among immigrants over mass deportations. That anger must be turned into class struggle against the common enemy, the capitalist ruling class, which thrives on promoting racial antagonisms in order to keep working people divided. Such struggle could provide a springboard for working-class consciousness and organization. Crucially, the political ties of the unions and the black masses to the Democratic Party must be severed. And that requires revolutionary leadership. To militant activists unwilling to be led down the path of the same dead-end liberal politics that have buried black struggle for decades, we offer the perspective of building a multiracial workers party in which black workers will be in the front ranks. Such a party would be dedicated to putting an end to the brutal capitalist order once and for all and establishing a socialist America. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

South Africa: New Wave of Anti-Immigrant Attacks

We reprint below an article from *Spartacist South Africa* No. 12 (Summer 2015), publication of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), on the latest wave of anti-immigrant attacks in that country. Since the article's publication, the mob violence has continued. On February 26, a group of South African shop owners threw gas bombs at several

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

foreign-owned stores in the Braamfischerville area of the Soweto township. In one case, a Somali shopkeeper suffered severe burns; as he was burning and begging for his life, the thugs looted his store. As our comrades' article notes, foreign-owned "spaza" shops have been especially targeted. These are informal, usually dilapidated, stores selling everyday household goods, which are often run from the owner's home.

The driving force behind the brutal anti-immigrant violence is the unspeakable poverty and destitution to which the overwhelming majority of black South Africans are consigned. Such atrocious conditions are overseen by the ruling Tripartite Alliance, which is led by the African National Congress (ANC) and includes the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU labor federation. The capitalist Alliance government launches its own attacks against the working class, including the 2012 Marikana massacre mentioned in the article below, when cops killed 34 striking miners (see "Blood on the Hands of ANC/SACP/COSATU Government," *WV* No. 1007, 31 August 2012).

Our comrades in Spartacist/South Africa emphasize that the forging of a Leninist workers party is key to overcoming the myriad racial, ethnic, tribal and other divisions by which South African capitalism has always maintained its rule. As the SSA noted in a 15 May 2008 leaflet, issued amid a wave of anti-immigrant terror that killed dozens: "Defending all of the oppressed and exploited in the struggle for proletarian state power, such a party would cut through the ethnic hatreds born of the horrendous poverty produced by superexploitation" (reprinted in *WV* No. 915, 23 May 2008).

* * *

At least six people are reported dead, scores of foreign-owned spaza shops violently looted and thousands of immigrants displaced in the worst anti-immigrant attacks South Africa has seen in the last seven years. It started in Snake Park, but quickly spread to other parts of Soweto and other townships around Gauteng Province. The attacks were sparked by the killing of a 14-year-old youth when a Somali shop owner fired shots at a group of youth threatening to loot his shop and destroy his property.

The current attacks are a horrific reminder of the May 2008 xenophobic attacks, during which 62 people were killed, hundreds injured and many thousands left homeless. Since then, there have been smaller outbreaks of anti-immigrant violence on a regular basis. To name just a few of these: In 2011 several foreign-owned shops were looted and burnt in the Port Elizabeth townships of Motherwell and KwaDwesi; In 2013 the East Rand township of Duduza erupted with violent looting of foreign-owned shops, spreading to other nearby areas like John Dube and Tsakane, following a dispute between a Somali shopkeeper and a customer over airtime.

There are widespread reports of cops' collusion in these attacks—including telling immigrants to go back to where they come from, demanding bribes in return for protection, and directly taking part in the looting. A cop was filmed taking part in the looting of a foreign-owned shop in Dobsonville. In other places like Zondi, residents reported that cops instructed looters to queue outside a targeted foreign shop and only allowed four looters at a time to prevent a stampede. As part of the bourgeois state—an organ of class domination and oppression of one class by another—the job of the police is to defend capitalist rule and profits by violently repressing the working class and the poor.

Notwithstanding the empty statements of government ministers decrying the looting and promising police protection to foreigners, the fact is that the cops get the green light from their masters in the ANC/SACP/COSATU Tripartite Alliance government. This capitalist government bears full responsibility for stoking anti-immigrant hatred and marginalising immigrants through repressive state crack-downs—from the persistent round-ups, months-long detention in hellish deportation prisons, and increasingly restrictive immigration laws.

Following the outbreak of the latest round of xenophobic violence, government ministers and ANC bigwigs poured fuel on the flames with nationalist demagogy, and blamed the immigrants who were victims of the attacks for defending themselves. ANC boss and former SACP and COSATU leader, Gwede Mantashe, ranted that "we have an army throughout the country that we have no control over." He called on the security ministers to take action and on the communities to monitor immigrants living in their neighbourhoods. As the attacks were raging, the Department of Home Affairs announced its intention to investigate the legal status of the foreigners doing business in Soweto. In what is a clear case of self-defence—an elementary human right, which we as Marxists uphold—the Somali shop-owner Senosi Yusuf, who shot 14-year-old Siphiwe Mahori, has been ridiculously charged with murder.

The ANC government absurdly denied that the lootings were a case of xenophobia, laying the blame on drug abuse and criminality. Reports by journalists in the field and communities show that almost exclusively foreign-owned shops were looted, while those belonging to South African citizens generally continued to operate with no disruptions. The ANC leaders' complaints about drug abuse-related criminality were echoed by the main opposition party, the neoliberal, white-dominated Democratic Alliance [DA], which called for the reintroduction of specialised police units on drugs and gangs. The only thing these bourgeois parties offer in response to the social misery confronting the youth today is increased cop repression and putting more young people behind bars.

Underlying the attacks on immigrants are the horrible living conditions in most black townships—marked by widespread unemployment; generalised poverty; lack of basic services like water, electricity and roads; lack of proper housing; poor or non-existent health facilities and schools; etc. Twenty-one years after the end of apartheid, with the attendant empty promises of a "better life for all," it is becoming increasingly clear to the black toilers that the Tripartite Alliance has done nothing to alter the social and economic conditions of the impoverished masses.

Behind the liberation rhetoric of the ruling Tripartite Alliance and the democratic trappings of "one man, one vote" is the reality of neo-apartheid capitalism, based on the same social and economic foundations of white minority rule: the brutal superexploitation of the overwhelmingly black majority by a tiny, fabulously rich white capitalist class now sprinkled with a few black front men like Cyril Ramaphosa, Patrice Motsepe, Tokyo Sexwale, etc. To divert anger from themselves and the capitalist rulers, the ANC/Alliance tops scapegoat immigrants, many of whom are fleeing economic collapse and civil war in their countries of origin. From mass unemployment, crime and poverty to lack of housing—the capitalist government that oversaw the Marikana massacre blames immigrants for the failures of neo-apartheid!

Some South Africans in Soweto stood

continued on page 10

Skuy/The Times

Anadolu

Above: Soweto residents looting shop owned by foreign nationals as cops look the other way, January 22. Below: Thousands march in Johannesburg to protest anti-immigrant attacks, February 12.

For Class-Struggle Defense of Immigrants!

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1065

3 April 2015

Imperialists Stoke Religious Fires

Reuters photos

Smoke rising from Iraqi city of Tikrit after U.S. air strikes, March 27. Inset: Shi'ite forces, acting as U.S. proxies, launch rocket near Tikrit during fighting with ISIS forces, March 8.

U.S. Out of the Near East Now!

MARCH 30—The blood of tens of thousands who have been slaughtered in communalist violence throughout the Near East is on the hands of the U.S. imperialist rulers, who continue to stoke religious and ethnic hatred throughout the region. To undermine the Iran-allied regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, the U.S. incited and armed sectarian Sunni forces, plunging that country into civil war. In Iraq, the U.S. is relying on militias controlled by longtime pariah, Shi'ite Iran, as ground troops against ISIS, which itself arose out of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and now controls a wide swath of the country. In Yemen, where for years the Obama administration has been launching drone strikes against the population in the name of targeting Sunni Al Qaeda forces, the U.S. is backing the Saudi-led attack against the Zaidi Shi'ite Houthis, who are viewed as an Iranian proxy.

At the same time, the White House has taken a spin at diplomacy with Iran, much to the alarm of Israel and the U.S.'s Sunni Muslim allies in the Persian Gulf. The Obama administration's latest round of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program—with the participation of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China—has also worked leading Republicans into a frenzy. In January, without informing the White House, Republican House Speaker John Boehner invited Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to rail against Iran at a joint meeting of Congress. The head of the Near East's only nuclear-armed state, Netanyahu was enthusiastically applauded throughout his March 3 speech in which he ominously declared that the terms the White House was offering Iran "will inevitably lead to nuclear war."

A week later, 47 Republican members of Congress sent an open letter to the Iranian government declaring that any agreement it negotiated with the Obama administration could be revoked by the next president "with the stroke of a pen and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time." Although the Israeli government has denied it, U.S. officials report that Israel has been spying on the nuclear negotiations and—what has really got the White House worked up—leaking the information to Congress. The Obama administration has tried to rein in the rabid Netanyahu as it continues its nuclear negotiations with Iran.

Down With Sanctions Against Iran!

On March 25, the Sunni monarchy of Saudi Arabia began bombing Yemen. With the support of a coalition including other Gulf states and Egypt, the Saudis aim to restore the government of Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who resigned the presidency in January in the face of attack by the Houthi rebels. The air campaign, for which the U.S. says it is providing "logistical and intelligence support," was announced in Washington by the Saudi ambassador. The Iranian government has denounced the U.S.-backed assault in Yemen.

Those who run U.S. imperialism add a twist to the expression that today's ally is tomorrow's enemy. For them, today's ally is *today's* enemy. The only constant is that imperialist domination breeds misery and war. Notwithstanding their bickering and conflicting policies, the Republicans and Democrats share a common class interest: maintaining U.S. supremacy in the oil-rich Near East. The imperialist system is based on war and plunder, and as the world's "superpower," U.S. imperialism is the greatest enemy of the world's workers and oppressed.

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

It is the duty of class-conscious workers everywhere, particularly in the U.S., to oppose all wars and occupations carried out by the imperialists. When the U.S. began air strikes against ISIS last year, we explained that "any force, however unsavory, that attacks, repels or otherwise impedes U.S. forces strikes a blow in the interests of the exploited and the oppressed" ("U.S. Out of Iraq! No Intervention in Syria!" *WV* No. 1051, 5 September 2014). We take a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and forces acting as their proxies, including the Baghdad government and the Shi'ite militias as well as the Kurdish *pesh merga* forces in Northern Iraq and the Syrian Kurdish nationalists. This does not mean we give the slightest political support to the reactionary ISIS butchers.

Since early March, a coalition dominated by Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias has been waging an offensive to recapture the Sunni city of Tikrit from ISIS control. Tehran has for some time used the sectarian bloodbath in Iraq to increase its influence in the region. When the U.S. began intensive bombing of Tikrit on March 25, several Shi'ite militias announced they would not collaborate with the U.S. and would pull out from the assault, a move the Pentagon claimed to "welcome." In fact, the militias remain part of the offensive in Tikrit. And, according to the *New York Times* (27 March), American officials have acknowledged that Shi'ite militias would "play a crucial part in subduing Tikrit."

For Marxists, what is decisive is the fact that in Tikrit the Shi'ite militias are acting as surrogates for U.S. imperialism, as they were even before the open involvement of U.S. forces. A victory for the Shi'ite militias and the Iraqi army would directly benefit the aims of U.S. imperialism, which is leading the regional war against ISIS. Likewise, if the militias were driven back by ISIS and other Sunni forces, this would

continued on page 4

Reuters

Secretary of State John Kerry with Iran's foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif during talks over Iran's nuclear program, March 16.

Louisiana Museum Shows Horrors of Slavery

14 March 2015

To the Editor,

Readers of *WV* may have recently seen an article in the February 26 *New York Times Magazine*, "Building the First Slavery Museum in America" about the newly opened Whitney Plantation/The Story of Stavery here in Louisiana, 50 miles upriver from New Orleans.

Before the Whitney even opened, there was a sneering article disingenuously titled "Slavery Museum Faces Skeptics—Some Say Exhibit in Louisiana Seeks More to Elicit Emotions Than Impart Facts" (*Wall Street Journal*, December 8, 2014). In it, the official voice of American finance capital interviewed various naysayers who had not set foot on the site and likely would not be caught dead there.

Also before the Whitney ever opened, the local voice of capital, the New Orleans *City Business* called it "Selling Slavery" in oversized type on the front page (December 11, 2014). They quoted another party who hadn't been to the museum, opining that it would only attract those looking for the "bleak version of history." It was remarkable how these 2 bourgeois papers went out of their way to cover the planned opening of an otherwise little-known museum, a reflection of their anger to this day about the smashing of slavery in the Civil War.

WV Photo

Nineteenth-century slave cabins at Whitney Plantation museum.

So I went to visit the Whitney Plantation, which is on the old River Road along the Mississippi, once home to dozens of big sugar cane plantations, the most labor- and profit-intense plantation system in the south. Slave labor here was the hardest and the punishments most brutal, captured in the fearful phrase being "sold down the river."

Considerably more than a 4-walls museum, the Whitney includes the renovated plantation home, 7 reconstructed slave houses, a slave jail, a memorial garden of granite panels inscribed with the words of former slaves recorded by the WPA Project in the 1930s describing life under slavery, and a Field of Angels naming thousands of infants born into slavery in Louisiana who died before the age of 3.

Dedicated to telling the story of the slaves, rather than the slaveowners, the Whitney contrasts with its neighbors like the iconic Oak Alley Plantation. Oak Alley is representative of those plantation owners' homes that were renovated in the 1960s and '70s, operating as B&Bs, wedding rental sites, and tourist attractions. Hoop-skirted tour guides lead tourists about these finely furnished houses and well-kept grounds, telling tales of antebellum "Gone with the Wind" grandeur, and—until now—disappearing slavery almost entirely from the story.

The Whitney, and the nearby Destrehan and River Road plantations are literally scenes of the crime of human slavery. They are located right at the center of the little-known slave uprising of January 1811, the largest in American history. Between 200 and 500 slaves, inspired by the successful Saint-Domingue/Haitian revolt of 1791-1804, took up arms, set fire to plantation houses, chased out the slaveowners and marched toward New Orleans fully intending to destroy the planter class, smash slavery and establish a black republic.

They were met and repulsed by a makeshift military scant miles from New Orleans and driven back up toward the river road. Many of the rebel slaves were killed in the brutal suppression of the uprising. The survivors were tried and executed by a hastily convened tribunal of plantation owners at Destrehan Plantation. The executed were decapitated and their heads mounted on pikes at Destrehan and all along the river road to terrorize the other slaves into submission.

Partisans of the working class who honor these rebel slaves will appreciate seeing the Whitney and Destrehan Plantation exhibits and learning the history of the 1811 revolt (availabte in Daniel Rasmussen's 2011 book *American Uprising*).

For finishing the Civil War,
Ruth
New Orleans, LA

TROTSKY

LENIN

Civil War and Social Revolution

This April 9 marks the 150th anniversary of the surrender of the Confederate Army, which effectively ended the Civil War that smashed chattel slavery. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin upheld the historic significance of the Civil War in a letter to American workers, written as U.S. imperialist forces were intervening in the Russian Civil War on the side of reactionaries out to overturn the proletarian October Revolution of 1917.

The American people have a revolutionary tradition which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who have repeatedly expressed their complete solidarity with us Bolsheviks. That tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the eighteenth century and the Civil War in the nineteenth century. In some respects, if we only take into consideration the "destruction" of some branches of industry and of the national economy, America in 1870 was ***behind*** 1860. But what a pedant, what an idiot would anyone be to deny on ***these*** grounds the immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1863-65!

The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing Negro slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the slaveowners, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war. But now, when we are confronted with the vastly greater task of overthrowing capitalist *wage*-slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie—now, the representatives and defenders of the bourgeoisie, and also the reformist socialists who have been frightened by the bourgeoisie and are shunning the revolution, cannot and do not want to understand that civil war is necessary and legitimate....

We are blamed for the destruction caused by our revolution.... Who are the accusers? The hangers-on of the bourgeoisie, of that very bourgeoisie who, during the four years of the imperialist war, have destroyed almost the whole of European culture and have reduced Europe to barbarism, brutality and starvation. These bourgeoisie now demand we should not make a revolution on these ruins, amidst this wreckage of culture, amidst the wreckage and ruins created by the war, nor with the people who have been brutalised by the war. How humane and righteous the bourgeoisie are!

—V.I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers" (August 1918)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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by Jacob Zumoff

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(Between 8th and 9th Ave.—
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Attica

The Nightmare That Never Ends

Teresa Miller

Inmates on "A" Block, Attica state penitentiary.

On 9 August 2011 George Williams, an inmate at New York's notorious Attica prison, was beaten so badly by a mob of huge white prison officers that he required surgical implantation of a plate and six pins in one of his broken legs. A shoulder, eye socket and ribs were also broken. The officers' shirts were so soaked with Williams' blood they made an inmate burn them, and they got another to mop the dayroom floor and walls that bore testimony to the brutality. The beating was carried out where other prisoners could see, and Williams' pleas for his life could be heard on other floors. Given the extent of his injuries, the prison infirmary nurse insisted that Williams be taken to an outside hospital, which likely saved his life. Although now released and living back in New Jersey, he is in constant pain and still suffers trauma from the attack.

On March 1, the eve of the scheduled trial of three of the sadistic prison officers, the *New York Times* published an in-depth exposé by The Marshall Project under the front-page headline, "A Brutal Beating Wakes Attica's Ghosts." This article shone a bright light on the institutional brutality and racist oppression at Attica. The next morning, the local District Attorney accepted a plea deal of misdemeanor misconduct. The felony charges of gang assault, conspiracy and evidence tampering evaporated. The thugs walked away with their pensions, case closed.

Announcing the plea deal, the D.A. said: "Let me be clear: This has never been about jail for these officers." Ain't that the truth! Until this case, no New York State prison guard has *ever* been charged, let alone convicted, of a non-sexual attack on an inmate. The Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association hired some of western New York's top criminal defense lawyers and was confident a jury from the area near the prison would not find against the thugs. The *Times* article quoted an inmate who had done over 20 years in Attica saying: "What they did? How they jumped that guy? That was normal.... It happens all the time." For prison officers—a part of the repressive apparatus of the state that keeps the capitalist class in power—racist brutality is not a crime; *it is their job.*

Rockefeller's Massacre

Attica is infamous for the 1971 massacre by state troopers and prison officers who retook the prison from insurgent inmates at the end of a four-day standoff. While the overcrowded prisons and brutal treatment the inmates were protesting sound very similar to the hellish conditions at Attica today, the social context was dramatically different. In 1971, there were intense social and political struggles taking place throughout society, from the "black power" movement to radical protests against U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam. The rebellion in Attica reflected these struggles inside the prison walls. Attica inmates were heavily black and Hispanic, and many identified with the Black Panther Party and the Puerto Rican Young Lords. Others were members of the Nation of Islam.

In the early morning of September 9, the prisoners erupted, seizing most of the institution and taking 39 hostages. They proclaimed: "WE are MEN! We are not beasts and do not intend to be heaten or driven as such.... We have set forth demands that will bring closer to reality the demise of these prison institutions that serve no useful purpose to the People of America, but to those who would enslave and exploit the people of America." The prisoners went on to demand the minimum wage for their labor, and an end to censorship and restrictions on political activity. They wanted a healthy diet, medical care and an end to segregation and punishment—i.e., some approximation of the minimum standards of life.

N.Y. State Special Commission on Attica

September 1971: After murderous suppression of Attica prison rebellion, inmates were forced to strip and run gauntlet of baton-wielding guards.

For the capitalist ruling class, the Attica rebellion had to be crushed with particular vengeance because the rebels had begun to see their struggle in political terms, including aspirations toward revolution. The inmates demanded amnesty and transfer to a "non-imperialistic country"; instead they got a death sentence.

Nelson Rockefeller, the liberal Republican governor, prepared the bloodbath. At 9:43 a.m. on September 13, a helicopter dropped CS gas over the yard, and 1,000 troopers and guards moved in for the kill. Prisoners were mowed down as they held their hands over their heads. Twenty-nine inmates and ten hostages were killed and many more injured, but the savagery of Rockefeller's goons was only just starting. Hundreds of black prisoners were made to strip, lie face down and crawl in the mud. They were lined up and forced to run a gauntlet of crazed, sadistic guards. Such brutality was no surprise. In *Uprising: Understanding Attica, Revolution, and the Incarceration State* (2011), Clarence Jones wrote that it was known at the time that "a substantial number of Attica prison guards were also members of the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan or its equivalent." As editor of the black newspaper *Amsterdam News*, Jones served at the request of the Attica inmates as one of the observers during the rebellion.

In the aftermath, 62 of the Attica Brothers were charged with a total of 1,300 crimes. Many charges were dropped after setbacks to the prosecution in the courts. Even an official report recognized that the police assault was "the bloodiest one-day encounter between Americans since the Civil War" except for the massacres of Native Americans in the late 19th century. Nevertheless, the real criminals of Attica—the racist authorities whose hands dripped with blood—were never even given a slap on the wrist. Rockefeller went on to serve a brief term as U.S. vice president.

We honor the heroic martyrs of Attica for their courageous stand against overwhelming odds. It is for their fight for justice and against oppression that we want the world's working people to remember them. Their demands for education and job training stood in stark contrast to the standard procedures of capitalist so-called justice: vindictive punishment designed to reduce the prisoner to a subhuman condition. The prisoners themselves refused to degrade the prison officer hostages as they themselves had been degraded.

Prisons and Racist U.S. Capitalism

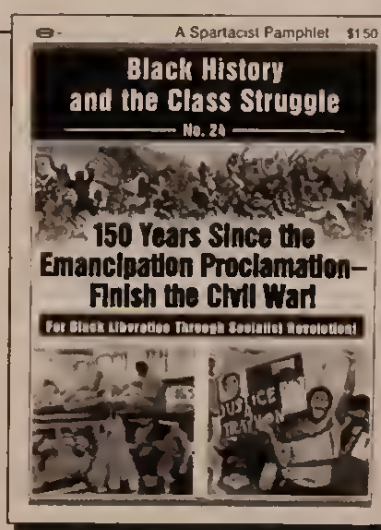
We observed at the time of the Attica rebellion that the "despicable racist guards are despised even by the ruling class that cynically uses them. The governor not only served notice on the prisoners that *rebellion does not pay*, and rebellion linked with revolutionary ideas means *certain death*, but he had a message for the guards too: Keep the upper hand or else!" ("Massacre at Attica," *WV* No. 1, October 1971). The spectre of the rebellion continues to haunt the prison authorities, who use it to impress upon all new guards that their job is to keep the inmates in line, using all available means.

Joseph Jazz Hayden, a former inmate who was transferred out of Attica seven days before the rebellion, wrote a letter that is posted on The Marshall Project's website commenting on its recent exposé. He stated: "It is apparent to me that nothing has changed...[the guards] are little more than 'Overseers' on a slave plantation." He continued, "Would things be different if the 'Overseers' were black? Nope!" Indeed, at the Rikers Island jail complex in New York City, the majority of the corrections officers are not white, but that does not change in the slightest their role as vicious overseers for the ruling class, delighting in the brutalization and humiliation of convicts and those awaiting trial (see "Rikers Island: Racist House of Horrors," *WV* No. 1048, 13 June 2014).

Today, the incarcerated population in the U.S. has mushroomed to some 2.4 million, seven times the number in 1971, not least as a result of the racist "war on drugs." The prison population grew massively in the 1970s and 1980s in direct proportion to the sharp decline in unionized manufacturing jobs, a measure of how the bourgeoisie has deemed whole layers of the ghetto and barrio masses "surplus." Prisons and jails represent, in concentrated form, the brutality of this racist capitalist society, with severe dehumanization and oppressive conditions directed against an already marginalized and demoralized population.

As Marxists, we support ameliorating the hideous conditions in the prisons, as seen in our defense of the California prisoners who went on hunger strike in 2013 to demand an end to the Security Housing Unit system of solitary confinement. At the same time, we understand that the capitalist state's prisons cannot be reformed into humane institutions. To lay the basis for abolishing the whole wretched system of crime and punishment requires a workers revolution to sweep away the bourgeois state and expropriate the class in whose interest the state is administered.

The rulers of U.S. imperialism, who in 1971 rained napalm and bombs on Vietnamese peasants fighting for revolution and CS gas and bullets on the Attica Brothers, today carry out incessant slaughter and torture abroad along with relentless state terror against the black population and attacks on the working class at home. It is the historic task of the working class to construct a socialist order where state torture and oppression will only be found in the pages of history books. The Spartacist League is determined to build a revolutionary proletarian party capable of leading the multiracial working class to power at the head of all the oppressed. ■



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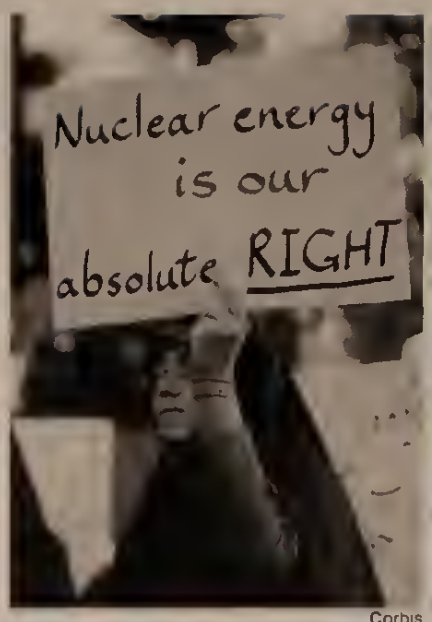
Near East...

(continued from page 1)

he a blow against U.S. imperialism. The hrutality of ISIS forces is widely broadcast in the Western media, but the Shi'ite militias and Iraqi government forces are cut of the same cloth. Whole Sunni villages have been wiped out after having been "libcrated" from ISIS.

This is not the first time the clerical regime in Iran has served the interests of the U.S. The Iranian regime supported the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, engaging in extensive intelligence and military coordination and supporting the U.S.-installed government. Not that this collaboration did the Iranian government any good—in January 2002, Iran became part of George W. Bush's "axis of evil" and subsequently the target of rounds of crippling sanctions under both the Bush and Obama administrations.

In the past, Israel attempted to bolster Persian-dominated Iran, even under the mullahs, as a bulwark against the regional Arab regimes. Israel played a key role in assisting the U.S. in the sale of weapons to Iran, as revealed when the Iran/contra scandal broke in 1986. At the time, U.S. military officials were shipping guns to the Iranian government in violation of Congressional bans, in order to fund right-wing contra death squads in Nicaragua. This was despite the U.S.'s strong tilt toward Iraq in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War.



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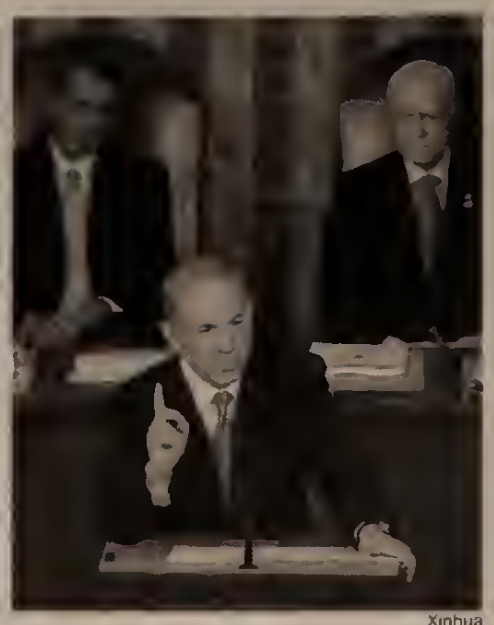
Xinhua

Left: Student protester in Tehran, November 2014. Right: Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounces any deal with Iran at joint session of U.S. Congress, March 3.

Getty

November 2004: U.S. Marines roll through Fallujah, Iraq, devastated by imperialist bombardment and occupation.

Although today the U.S. and Iran are effectively cooperating on the ground in Iraq and nuclear talks are ongoing with a March 31 deadline, the U.S. has not let up on the punishing economic sanctions against Iran. The sanctions are an act of war, hitting Iran's poor and working population the hardest. The White House's professed purpose is to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The Iranian government has always denied seeking to develop nuclear weapons, and even pro-imperialist analysts and U.S. intelligence agencies have admitted there is no evidence of such a program. The 20 percent uranium enrichment level cited by the imperialists as the level that can be quickly converted to weapons-grade is the same needed for medical isotopes for cancer treatment.

The possession of nukes is no guarantee of security from attack by U.S. imperialism, with its massive nuclear arsenal and overwhelming military power. Nevertheless, nuclear weapons are an important deterrent against military attack and can provide a measure of independence from imperialist diktat. This was demonstrated in the negative in Libya. In 2003, in addition to signing on to the imperialists' war on terror, Muammar el-Qaddafi renounced Libya's nuclear weapons program and welcomed imperialist inspectors. Eight years later, he was overthrown by the U.S. and allied imperialist powers, setting the stage for the current bloody chaos in Libya. Despite the fact that we give no political support to the reactionary mullah regime in Tehran, we Marxists recognize that Iran needs nuclear weapons as well as effective delivery systems to deter attack, not least from Israel.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

March marked the 12th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which toppled Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated government and plunged the country into communalist slaughter. To buttress their occupation, the U.S. imperialists systematically played off sectors of the Iraqi population against each other, fueling the communalist bloodshed. The U.S. and allied powers committed and unleashed mass murder, indiscriminate terror and torture on a scale far exceeding that of the brutal Iraqi strongman they replaced. A recent report by Physicians for Social Responsibility found that some one million Iraqis died as a result of the U.S. invasion and occupation.

ISIS, an offshoot of Al Qaeda, is itself a product of U.S. interventions. The founding elements of Al Qaeda, including the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of its Iraqi affiliate, were trained and funded by the CIA as it assembled a reactionary horde to oppose the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In Iraq, ISIS was able to garner support among even some secular Sunni Arabs as a result of the repression they suffered at the hands of the overwhelmingly Shi'ite government installed by the U.S.

Iraq today is a shattered society, with its industry and infrastructure in ruins. To be an Iraqi is to live under the constant threat of sectarian murder: Sunni vs. Shi'ite, Arab vs. Kurd. And if you are from a small community—e.g., the Christians or Yazidis—with no militias to back you, you live or die at the sufferance of others. This is the "liberation" that U.S. imperialism brought to the peoples of Iraq.

The social emancipation of the Iraqi masses is dependent on working-class struggle in nearby countries where there are strategic concentrations of the industrial working class, centrally Iran, Turkey and Egypt. We have no illusions that it will be an easy task to break workers of the Near East, including in Zionist Israel, from nationalism and religious reaction and win them to the Marxist program of proletarian revolution. But there will be no end to ethnic and national oppression, no liberation of women, no end to the exploitation of working people short of shattering the capitalist order and laying the basis for a socialist federation of the Near East.

What is needed is the construction of Marxist workers parties, sections of a reforged Fourth International, to unite the working classes of the region around a program of revolutionary internationalism and class independence from the imperialists, the local bourgeoisies and forces of religious reaction. This perspective crucially hinges on linking up with the multiracial working class in the U.S. in a fight against capitalist rule here in the belly of the imperialist beast.

If our readers can make no sense of what is happening in Iraq, Yemen or anywhere else the U.S. is intervening, there is a reason: this ruling class is crazed. Jon Stewart gave it his twist on the *Daily Show*: "It took decades of destabilizing conflict, but we finally figured out how to wage a proxy war against ourselves." Not only is Washington promising even more years of war in the Near East—whatever happened to pulling out from Iraq and Afghanistan?—it is also simultaneously provoking capitalist Russia, a major nuclear power, over Ukraine while constantly menacing the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state through spy flights and military encirclement.

The American ruling class flaunts its barbarity, openly debating the virtues of torture, riding roughshod over nations around the world and leading the planet in the incarceration of its own population while carrying out grisly executions at home. As the U.S. imperialists sow death and destruction across the Near East, working people in the U.S. have seen their wages driven down, social services gutted and legal rights whittled away. While U.S. drones blow away schoolchildren and wedding parties in Muslim countries, the cops gun down black and Latino men on American streets.

Since the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, the arrogant, power-mad U.S. rulers have seen no significant obstacle to their global designs. Self-designated cops of the world, they believe they can do anything to anybody and get away with it. But the U.S. bourgeoisie's status as supreme world power is beset hy contradictions. They can direct killer drones to take out today's "enemy" from thousands of miles away, but at home bridges are near collapsing, puhlic education is starved of funds (except in wealthy suhurhs) and much of industry is hollowed out. One bit of infrastructure they have built up is super-high-spced data networks for Wall Street, where "economic growth" spells only the latest speculative investment craze. Meanwhile in New York City's East Village, people are killed and buildings leveled by an exploding gas line.

This decrepit, depraved profit system has got to go! The struggle of the working class in this country to liberate itself from exploitation is also the struggle that can liberate all those ground under the heel of the imperialist colossus. The American proletariat, currently demoralized by decades of defeats, must be imbued with the consciousness of its revolutionary potential to sweep away the capitalist system and create a new society organized to serve human need. In "Imperialist Rape of Iraq" (*WV* No. 800, 28 March 2003), written at the time of the U.S. invasion, we argued:

> "Mass slaughter is the concentrated expression and ultimate logic of the 'normal' brutal workings of the capitalist system, which daily condemns countless numbers around the world to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care and industrial murder.
>
> "If there is to be a choice for coming generations of working-class and minority youth other than one of grinding exploitation, jobtessness, mass imprisonment or military servitude, if the impoverished masses of the world are to have a future other than starvation and slaughter, this whole system must be torn up by its roots through a socialist revolution and replaced by a rational, planned economy internationally."

The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League, which is dedicated to building the parties that can bring this perspective to the working class in the U.S. and internationally. ■

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

The Declaralion of Principles of the Internalional Communist League (Fourth Inlernationalisl) is a concrete expression of our purpose: lo build national sections of a democratic-centralist Internalional which can lead the slruggle for worldwide socialist revolution. This importanl documenl, which was adopled al the Third Internalional Conference of lhe ICL in early 1998, was published in the four language editions of *Spartacist* and additionally in eleven other languages.

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CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

State Vendetta Continues

Free Albert Woodfox Now!

On February 12, class-war prisoner Albert Woodfox was indicted once again for the fatal stabbing of Louisiana prison guard Brent Miller in 1972. Woodfox has seen this frame-up conviction overturned three times before, only to find himself entombed in solitary confinement in the notorious Angola prison.

Last November, a federal appeals court upheld the 2013 federal district court decision granting *habeas corpus* relief, overturning his conviction on the grounds of racist grand jury rigging. On March 2, Woodfox briefly emerged from the prison hell that has been his home for over 40 years to attend a hearing in federal district court seeking bail pending his retrial. Determined that this patently innocent fighter for black rights rot in solitary until he dies, the prosecution told the federal court judge who granted Woodfox's *habeas* petition that this was a state court matter—and that the judge should just butt out. The judge made no ruling on Woodfox's bail application, keeping him behind bars.

After they organized a Black Panther Party chapter at Angola prison, Woodfox and fellow inmates Herman Wallace and Robert King, known as the Angola Three, were put in the crosshairs by their jailers. Woodfox and Wallace were framed up for stabbing the prison guard. King was falsely convicted of killing a fellow inmate a year later. Wallace died from liver cancer in October 2013, only three days after his release from prison. In an act both sadistic and vindictive, the State of Louisiana responded to the court order releasing Wallace by indicting him again the day before his death. King was released in 2001 and has been active in the fight to free Woodfox.

As for Woodfox's conviction, there was not a shred of physical evidence linking him to the murder, and it was later revealed that the key prosecution "eyewitness" was bribed for his testimony at trial. So transparent was the frame-up that prison guard Miller's widow, Leontine Rogers, believes Woodfox to be innocent and has joined in the call to release him. In 2008, Angola prison warden Burl Cain declared that even if Woodfox were not guilty, he would still keep him in solitary because "I still know that he is still trying to practice Black Pantherism."

The persecution of Woodfox highlights the ongoing capitalist state vendetta against onetime members of the Black Panther Party—the best of a generation of black activists who sought a revolutionary road to black liberation. Thirty-eight members of the Panthers were killed by the cops and FBI, and hundreds more were framed up and imprisoned on bogus charges. Panther leaders Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) and Dhoruba bin Wahad among others spent decades behind bars before their release, while Mumia Abu-Jamal and Panther supporters Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter have between them spent over 120 years behind bars for crimes they did not commit.

Carrie Reichardt

Angola Three prisoners Albert Woodfox (left) and the late Herman Wallace in 2008.

Now 68 years old, Woodfox has spent decades confined in a two-by-three-meter cell 23 hours a day. According to his lawyers, he suffers from hypertension, heart disease, chronic renal insufficiency, diabetes, anxiety and insomnia—conditions no doubt caused and/or exacerbated by decades of vindictive and inhumane treatment. We reiterate our call for Woodfox's immediate freedom and encourage our readers to take up his cause.■

Palestinian Activist Rasmea Odeh: Overturn Conviction! No Deportation!

Capping a political witchhunt, on March 12 in Detroit, U.S. district court judge Gershwin Drain stripped Rasmea Odeh of her American citizenship and sentenced her to 18 months in prison to be immediately followed by deportation. A Chicago-based Palestinian activist and the associate director of the Arab American Action Network (AAAN), Odeh was convicted last November of the bogus charge of "unlawful procurement of citizenship." Her supposed crime was failing to disclose on her 2004 naturalization application a 1970 frame-up conviction by an Israeli military tribunal for alleged involvement in planting bombs at a supermarket and the British consulate in Jerusalem. The evidence for that conviction was a false confession secured through torture—a common practice of the Zionist military in the Occupied Territories.

Judge Drain, a President Obama appointee, blocked every effort by Odeh to mount an effective legal defense. While giving the prosecution wide latitude to use whatever evidence it wanted from Israeli documents, he derisively excluded evidence of "torture, rape and all that stuff." The judge later ruled that Odeh's attempts to present this evidence constituted "obstruction of justice." Drain barred expert testimony that Odeh suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder because of her brutal treatment at the hands of the Israeli state. Part of Odeh's defense was that the disorder caused her to omit her wrongful Israeli conviction when replying to the question on the naturalization form about prior imprisonment or arrest.

During sentencing, Drain repeatedly claimed that Odeh's was not a "political case." In fact, the Obama government's prosecution of Odeh underscores how "anti-terrorism" has been a pretext for the capitalist rulers' attacks on basic democratic rights and is ultimately aimed at the left and labor movement. Odeh came to the attention of the Feds during a 2010 "war on terror" witchhunt in Chicago and Minneapolis. The FBI raided the homes of several leftists and union activists, including supporters of the AAAN and Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO), for alleged "material support to terrorism"—in this case, support for the struggle for Palestinian national rights. Seeking to link Odeh's AAAN with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a secular-nationalist organization designated by the U.S. State Department as "terrorist", the Feds obtained thousands of documents from the Israeli government, some of which called Odeh's 1970 conviction to their attention. As a result of those raids, some two dozen leftists still live with the fear of indictment hanging over their heads. Hands off the leftist activists!

Reuters

Rasmea Odeh leaving Detroit federal courthouse with supporters after her sentencing, March 12.

"In 1967, Israel Destroys Everything"

Odeh and her family were among the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians forced from their homes with the establishment of the Zionist state of Israel in 1948. Shortly after her birth, Odeh and her family fled their home near Jerusalem, settling in Ramallah in the West Bank, only to have the nightmare begin again in 1967 with the Israeli occupation of the area following the Six Day War against Egypt, Syria and Jordan. As she described at her sentencing hearing, "In 1967 Israel destroys everything.... There were bodies in the street, houses destroyed, and one part of our house destroyed."

In 1969, the Israeli army of occupation rounded up 500 Palestinians, including Odeh and her father. During three weeks of detention, Odeh's jailers beat her repeatedly, ultimately extracting a "confession" by threatening to force Odeh and her father to have sex. Her captors then raped Odeh with a wooden stick. In 1979, after ten years in prison, she was released in a prisoner swap. Later, Odeh obtained a law degree in Jordan, and in 1995 immigrated to the U.S., first living in Detroit before settling in Chicago. She has spent the last 20 years as a community organizer and activist.

Odeh's case has sparked solidarity protests across the country. Palestinian activists and leftists, among them the reformist FRSO, packed Judge Drain's courtroom and staged protests outside. Following her release pending appeal, the FRSO fatuously declared, "Victory as Rasmea Odeh Goes Home After Sentencing" (*Fight-Back! News*, 12 March). Expressing the FRSO's view of the American capitalist state as neutral, FRSO member Joe Iosbaker, who was himself a target of the 2010 FBI raids, denounced her sentencing but went on to state that the Israeli army "brutally and sadistically tortured her into signing a confession.... In the U.S. we do not accept confessions signed through torture." Perhaps Iosbaker never heard of Guantánamo, CIA torture or the many people who have been exonerated after being locked up based on false confessions extracted through cop torture.

While it is good that Odeh did not get the seven-year sentence the prosecutors sought, this outcome is hardly a victory for a woman who should not have spent one second in jail—in Israel or the U.S. Her looming deportation to Jordan is particularly ominous given Jordan's well-known history of torturing Palestinian activists, not to mention the mass slaughter of Palestinians by the Jordanian monarchy in 1970. Our defense of Odeh is linked to our defense of the oppressed Palestinians, who have suffered for decades under the boot of Israeli occupation, as well as our opposition to the assault on democratic rights waged under the "war on terror." Odeh's prosecution is meant to chill dissent for those who speak out against Israeli and U.S. depredations. While we Marxist revolutionaries do not share Odeh's Palestinian nationalist politics, we stress that an injury to one is an injury to all. We urge trade unions, civil liberties organizations and others to demand that her conviction be overturned and her citizenship reinstated. Funds are urgently needed for Odeh's legal defense, to which the Partisan Defense Committee has contributed. Donations can be mailed to: Committee to Stop FBI Repression, PO Box 14183, Minneapolis, MN 55414.■

After Criminal Attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* and Jewish Market

France: Down With Anti-Muslim Repression!

AP

Reuters

Etat-major des armées/armée de Terre

Center: "National unity" march in Paris, January 11, led by French president François Hollande and a host of capitalist rulers. Left: Masked cops arrest suspect in anti-terror sweep in Lunel, southern France, January 27. Right: French imperialist troops in Mali, March 10.

The article below is translated from Le Bolchévik *No. 211 (March 2015), newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France.*

LE BOLCHEVIK

One month after the criminal murders of Jews—targeted for the sole reason that they were Jewish—and of *Charlie Hebdo* journalists in Paris by three Islamic fundamentalists, [French president] François Hollande declared at his February 5 press conference that the "spirit" of the January 11 [reactionary "national unity"] demonstrations must live on. He added that the Republic "will be uncompromising and merciless." Hollande and other world leaders all seized upon the killings as an opportunity to further extend their "war on terror." Islamic reaction in the French *banlieues* [minority and working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of big cities] is being fueled by racist segregation and discrimination, which mainly target youth of Muslim background, as well as by imperialist terror in the Muslim world.

During the press conference, Hollande stated that "The top challenge facing France is the struggle against terrorism." He welcomed the "protection of the Sahel zone" in Africa provided by French troops, which are also fighting Islamic fundamentalists in Iraq. One doesn't have to be a Marxist to know that French troops invaded Mali two years ago, and more recently invaded Niger, not to protect the local population from Islamic law but rather to secure the uranium mines operated by the French [nuclear group] Areva in Niger, not far from the border with Mali, as well as other French interests in the region. Niger provides around a third of the uranium supplied to French nuclear plants. ***French troops out of Africa and the Near East!***

Wars and military occupations are intrinsic to the decaying capitalist system and opposition to imperialist war requires a fight for socialist revolution. Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, ever-bolder imperialist depredations have fanned the flames of Islamic fundamentalism. The rise of Islamic reaction in the Muslim world itself is a product of imperialist machinations and of the bankruptcy of secular bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism in the region. For example, it was the betrayals of the secular-nationalist PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] that paved the way for the rise of reactionary Islamist groups like Hamas. Hamas was initially supported by the Zionist rulers of Israel as a counterweight to Yasir Arafat's organization.

In Afghanistan, the imperialists gave massive financial and military support to the *jihad* against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. French and other secret services have for years played a murky role in support of Islamic fundamentalist insurgents in Syria (until very recently). With each new massacre perpetrated by the imperialists in the countries subjected to their bombing campaigns, a new wave of Islamic fighters is created.

While the imperialists, through their military, political and economic might, are the world's biggest criminals, the Islamic fundamentalists, who don't have the same means at their disposal, are no less inclined to bigotry and violence. Today, groups such as Al Qaeda or ISIS are recruiting thousands of youth to their feudal worldview, which considers women to be little better than slaves and equates all Jews with the Zionist butchers running Israel. In this sense, the Islamists share the outlook of the Western racist imperialist rulers, for whom anyone of Muslim background has become the new all-purpose "enemy within" and the official "enemy without." In the name of the "war on terror," the imperialists are strengthening their arsenal of repression and waging war on working people at home and abroad.

The attitude of the French ruling class and its imperialist partners to other terrorist attacks in recent years shows their hypocrisy and reveals where their real concerns lie. When terrorists attacked the synagogue in the Rue Copernic in Paris in October 1980—the first deadly attack on French Jews since the days of the Vichy regime—then-Prime Minister Raymond Barre described it as an "odious act that intended to strike Jews who were going to synagogue and struck innocent Frenchmen crossing the Rue Copernic." He thus inadvertently exposed the French bourgeoisie's deeply held anti-Jewish prejudices, implying that Jews might not be truly French and at the same time that they might not be innocent. At the time, the French ruling class was hailing bin Laden and his *mujahedin* reactionaries in Afghanistan as "freedom fighters" against the Soviet Union.

In the 1980s, Catholic fundamentalists also planted bombs in French cinemas, killing one and injuring a dozen members of the audience. They were seeking to shut down [Martin] Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ* as well as *Une Affaire de Femmes* [Story of Women], a film by Claude Chabrol about a French woman who was executed for performing abortions under Vichy. In response, there were no "republican" mass demonstrations to defend free speech.

Nor did the heads of state of the imperialist world organize a mass assembly when Anders Behring Breivik killed eight people with a van bomb in Oslo, Norway and massacred 69 social-democratic youth at a summer camp four years ago. Breivik claimed that the main motive behind his carnage was to publicize his anti-Muslim, woman-hating, white nationalist "manifesto." The attitude of the imperialists to such crimes reveals where they really stand: for them, anti-Muslim massacres are not terrorist attacks.

"We are Charlie"—Recipe for Fascist Growth and Police Repression

The "spirit of Charlie" was also evident in the early February by-election in Doubs [in eastern France]. The FN [National Front, a fascist party] came close to winning after campaigning against the "Islamic peril." In our statement published following the January attacks [*WV* No. 1060, 23 January], we pointed out that the display of "national unity," French chauvinism and anti-Muslim "Republican values" would strengthen the fascists. On February 12, five high school students desecrated hundreds of graves in a Jewish cemetery in Sarre-Union, Alsace [in northeastern France], giving Nazi salutes and spitting on Stars of David. And in the month following the January attacks, the Collective Against Islamophobia in France had already recorded 33 attacks on mosques and prayer rooms.

In the Doubs by-election, the FN got twice the number of votes it had obtained in 2012, in the context of significant working-class abstention fueled by deep disillusionment with the virulently anti-working-class policies relentlessly carried out by the Hollande government. The outgoing Socialist Party deputy Pierre Moscovici was a member of this government until he was transferred to Brussels. Moscovici, a front man for the Peugeot [auto manufacturing] family, played his part in the austerity and industrial restructuring policies that led to a massive downsizing of the local Peugeot Sochaux plant. Sochaux had been the biggest auto plant in France for decades; its workforce has shrunk from 40,000 to 10,000 workers.

The continued support of the left for the European Union (EU), with its attendant austerity and increasing economic dislocation affecting the whole of soci-

Didier Crasnault/Voix du Nord

January 30: Workers at Bombardier train factory in Crespin rally to prevent firing of union militant Karim Khatabi, targeted as part of anti-Muslim witch-hunt after attack on *Charlie Hebdo*—in the midst of union-led fight over health and safety issues.

cty, has also fueled the growth of the FN, which is the only significant political force opposing the EU and the euro. The left reformists spend their time spreading the lie that with a little more pressure from below, the EU could become more "social" and dole out a few crumbs to the workers and poor. *Down with the capitalist-imperialist European Union!*

The government has also seized on the January attacks as an opportunity to further roll back civil liberties and heighten state regimentation of the entire population. Its attacks are being carried out in the name of defending "free speech." In our January statement, we denounced the trade-union leadership for embracing the bourgeoisie's "Charlie" campaign of "unity" with the "republican" ruling class. The workers movement must mobilize to defend the teachers and workers under attack for refusing to march in lock step with national unity for "Charlie" and salute its racist cartoons. *An attack against one is an attack against all!*

There are currently 10,000 armed soldiers patrolling the country as part of Vigipirate [a police and military mobilization to sow terror in minority communities and patrol transportation hubs hunting for supposed terror suspects]. Hundreds of new hires have been announced for the political police (the DGSI) and there are plans to extend isolation wards and create mini-Guantánamos for those prisoners classed as radical Muslims. The UMP [Union for a Popular Movement, a right-wing party] and the FN are increasingly clamoring to extend the criteria for stripping people of French citizenship and to arm the cops more heavily, among other ever more draconian measures.

In February, the government added a new "Big Brother"-style tool to its arsenal in order to keep the exploited and oppressed in line. The Office Central de Lutte Contre la Cybercriminalité [Central Office for Combating Cybercrime] was launched as part of the "war on terror" law enacted in November. This "administrative body," as the government calls it, can now block websites without first referring the decision to a judge. It has already targeted 50 "jihadist" sites for closure.

Furthermore, a new bill will be debated in March that would grant the state additional powers to extend and legalize its existing massive surveillance operation. In the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations about the U.S. spy network in 2013, *Le Monde* revealed that the DGSE [the French foreign intelligence service] runs its own electronic surveillance program and uses methods similar to those of the U.S. National Security Agency's Prism program, exposed by Snowden, to collect the population's telephone and Internet data. We demand: *Free Chelsea Manning! Hands off Edward Snowden! Hands off Julian Assange!*

NPA and Lutte Ouvrière Pay Tribute to *Charlie Hebdo*

The despicable murder of the *Charlie Hebdo* editorial team must be condemned. But that does not mean that their anti-Muslim bigotry should therefore be condoned. The Greens, the Left Party and the PCF [French Communist Party] all joined in the "national unity" for Charlie, but reformist groups such as Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and the NPA [New Anticapitalist Party] also bought into the "We are Charlie" loyalty oath to the Republic. While Israeli liberal historian Schlomo Sand could state that "In the majority of the magazine's cartoons about Islam that came to my attention over the last decade, what I saw was a manipulative hatred, mainly designed to appeal to its readers, obviously non-Muslims," the so-called "far left" here, the NPA and LO, instead published pages upon pages in honor of a newspaper which had become a tool in the bourgeoisie's "war on terror."

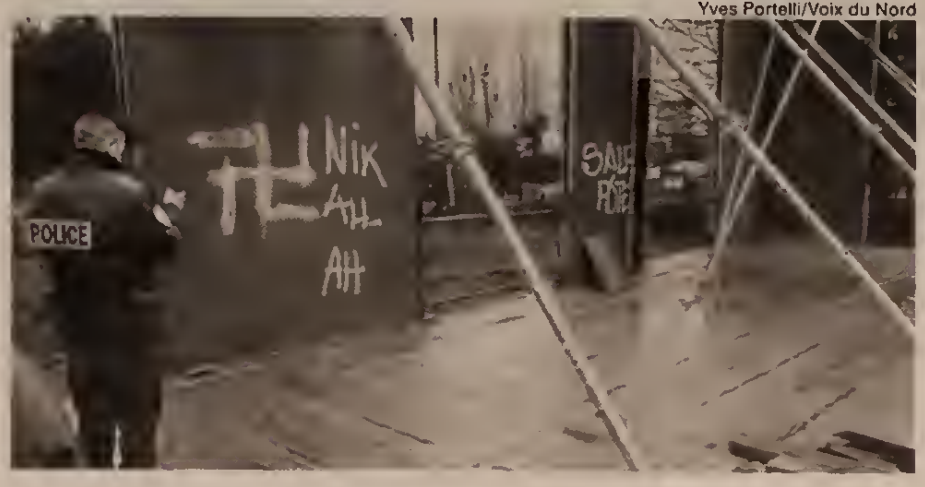
The NPA published a full page of politically correct cartoons as a "tribute" to Charb [*Charlie Hebdo* editor Stéphane Charbonnier] & Co., noting that they had "known and appreciated" them. They managed to add a note of caution: "even though disagreements have for some time led us to debate and polemicize with Charlie Hebdo" (*L'Anticapitaliste*, 15 January). For Lutte Ouvrière, there was no such hint of criticism of *Charlie Hebdo*'s constant racist provocations. They too printed a set of cartoons under a great big "Merci Charlie" headline to thank the paper for its "uncompromising vision of this society, of the political leaders or even the religious dignitaries, many of whom are today singing the praises [of *Charlie Hebdo*'s cartoonists] with the utmost hypocrisy while yesterday they fought against them. Thank you for this courage, which they paid for with their lives" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 16 January). For LO, the anti-Jewish attack at the Hyper Cacher supermarket was barely worth a mention, while they were busy paying tribute to their "secular" buddies. Obviously, with such odes to "Charlie," neither LO nor the NPA can begin to explain why Hollande, Obama, Netanyahu et al. were also all "Charlie."

At its third congress, which ended on February 1, the NPA passed a motion calling for a "Campaign against national unity," criticizing the fact that "most of the organizations of the workers movement lined up behind national unity by calling to demonstrate in Paris on January 11, at the risk of deepening the rift with a section of the population which felt stigmatized." This is all well and good, but while the NPA may not have marched in Paris alongside Hollande and the other imperialist war criminals who attended on January 11, they did however call on the population to participate in similar "republican" demonstrations across the country (*L'Anticapitaliste*, 15 January).

These demonstrations, featuring the mayor or prefect and the whole gamut of local bourgeois and social-democratic politicians, had fundamentally the same politics of national unity as the Paris one. In Toulouse, the NPA built a demonstration called on the slogan "Charlie will live, hate will not pass." It signed the call for the march, which stated: "It is by continuing the struggle of those who have fallen in the fight against obscurantism and for freedom, peace, solidarity, respect and tolerance that the demands for justice and social progress that they stood for will go forward." In Perpignan, "every republican, man or woman, every democrat and every lover of liberty, equality and fraternity" was invited to the demonstration, which the NPA and others were building. The NPA finally pulled out when those most ardent "lovers" of French chauvinism, the fascists of the FN, accepted the organizers' invitation and sent [FN vice-president and member of the EU parliament] Louis Aliot to head up their contingent. The ultimate target of the fascists is the organized workers movement. In the absence of a revolutionary working-class leadership pointing the way toward a struggle against the racist capitalist order, the FN is dangerously gaining ground.

We call on workers to reject the drive for national unity and to fight instead for class unity. The reformist labor misleaders who are inspired by the "spirit of January 11" are an obstacle to this class perspective. Instead, it is necessary and urgent to mobilize workers and immigrants to stop the fascists.

AFP



Yves Portelli/Voix du Nord

Above: Jewish men amid broken gravestones at desecrated Jewish cemetery in Sarre-Union, February 17. Below: Vandalism at site of mosque under construction in Liévin, January 9.

NPA's Pro-Imperialist Record

Just as hypocritical was the NPA's newfound political virginity in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, with regard to the role of French imperialism. On January 9, just after the attacks, the NPA stated that "this barbaric violence is the monstrous child... of the continuous wars waged against the people since the first Iraq war, in Afghanistan, Libya, Africa and Syria.... These wars, which are solely aimed at maintaining the rule of multinational corporations and their right to plunder the wealth, thereby fuel the worst reactionary fundamentalists." But they simply forgot to add that they themselves, or their predecessor, the LCR [Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, affiliated with the United Secretariat], had most of the time criminally lined up behind their own imperialism in these bloody wars.

In the 1980s, at the time of the war in Afghanistan between the Soviet Union and the CIA-funded *mujahedin* Islamists, the LCR called for a Soviet withdrawal as early as 1981. In 1979, the Soviet Army was asked by the left-nationalist PDPA [People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan] government to intervene militarily against the anti-Communist tribal chiefs and mullahs, who were committed to mass illiteracy and the enslavement of women. We said: "Hail Red Army!" and called to "Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

The criminal withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1989 opened the door to the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR itself and greatly contributed to the growth of Islamic reaction today. The NPA's predecessor, however, supported *mujahedin* leader Ahmed Shah Massoud, claiming he was a progressive element fighting both the imperialists and the Soviet Union. When this same Massoud took power in Kabul in 1992, he instituted *sharia* law and reimposed the *burqa*. At the time of the 2001 imperialist attack, his [Northern Alliance] forces served as ground troops for NATO.

In 2011, the NPA also declared "its total support to the insurgents in their struggle for democracy and for the fall of the dictatorship" of Qaddafi in Libya. They maintained this position even after [then-president] Nicolas Sarkozy and other imperialists intervened militarily to topple Qaddafi and place these same "insurgents" in power.

The NPA learned no lessons from the imperialist devastation in Libya. Two years later, they were begging Hollande to arm the rebels in Syria: "The international workers and democratic movement must demand from our governments that they immediately provide weapons to the Free Syrian Army which has been mandated by the Syrian revolution to defend it" (*Tout est à nous!*, 13 June 2013). As for us, we have no side in the reactionary civil war between Assad and the rebels.

Last fall, the NPA went on to call on their own imperialist government to send weapons to the Kurdish nationalists of the PYD [Democratic Union Party] in Kobani (NPA statement, 9 October 2014), knowing full well that the PYD had become the imperialists' ground troops against ISIS, with whom these same imperialists were allied only yesterday. In contrast, while stating our intransigent political opposition to the obscurantist reactionaries of ISIS, we wrote: "Marxists side militarily with the ISIS fighters when they target the imperialists and their proxies, be they Syrian or Iraqi Kurdish nationalists, or the Baghdad government and its Shi'ite militias" (*Le Bolchévik* No. 210, December 2014).

Since the start of the Syrian conflict, which is fueled by the imperialists in order to bring about regime change, over 200,000 people have died and more than 10 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes. Looking to the imperialists for aid is like asking an arsonist to put out a fire; it is a suicidal strategy for the Syrian population. In this way, the reformists contribute to the current rise of reaction.

LO Provides Left Cover for "Republican Secularism"

As for Lutte Ouvrière, they denounced the "despicable policies and wars carried out by the great powers" which have fueled Islamic fundamentalism. They continued: "But what is most detrimental is that there is now almost no workers movement left worthy of its name, which makes it possible for reactionary ideas to spread among some youth" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 16 January). In particular, LO has for many years bemoaned the weakening of the PCF, but back in the days when it was strong and administered the capitalist state in numerous municipal councils, the PCF betrayed the working class over and over again.

continued on page 8

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For example, it betrayed the revolutionary opportunity in May 1968. A dozen years later, in 1980, it sent a bulldozer to tear down a hostel for Malian workers in Vitry in order to prove their credentials in the hope of obtaining ministerial posts in the future government of [Socialist president] François Mitterrand. Such betrayals have greatly helped "reactionary ideas to spread among some youth." LO here demonstrates that its political perspective does not go beyond a reformist workers movement negotiating a few reforms in exchange for maintaining social peace, i.e., the capitalist order.

The French workers movement has certainly been weakened by many betrayals, especially since the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. But the problem is not per se the weakening of reformist organizations such as the PCF or LO. It is the general, albeit uneven and not eternal, retrogression of workers' consciousness. The most advanced layer of workers no longer believes that a collectivized, socialist society is possible. Workers no longer believe that this is an achievable goal, or that it is worth pursuing. This is an expression of the lying dogma, constantly propounded by the bourgeoisie since the destruction of the Soviet Union, that "communism is dead."

The number of people who fundamentally identify with the proletariat has fallen, as seen by the growing appeal of petty-bourgeois populist formations like Podemos and Syriza. In France, we are also seeing certain sections of the proletariat, even some who were formerly on the left, starting to vote for the FN, the most dangerous *enemies* of the working class and the oppressed. The period will need to change, with a sharp increase in working-class struggle and the intervention of a communist vanguard, in order for Marxism to once again win the allegiance of a layer of the proletariat.

By joining the French bourgeoisie's campaign to promote "secular" republican values, LO bears particular responsibility. Their own campaigns against the Islamic headscarf have contributed to racist segregation and to the exclusion of French youth of Muslim background today. This in turn encourages these youth to search for an illusory refuge in religion and other forms of social backwardness like anti-Jewish racism. This is both exploited and fueled by anti-Jewish demagogues like Dieudonné and his sidekick Alain Soral, a bona fide "national socialist" fascist.

LO was instrumental in spearheading the 2004 law banning the headscarf in schools through their active role in expelling two veiled high school students, Alma and Lila Lévy, from their school in Aubervilliers [a Paris suburb] in 2003. Ten years later, in the context of the economic crisis, anti-Muslim attacks are on the rise, particularly against veiled women. The FN is the first to benefit from this. Despite this, LO continues its secular preaching, and in 2013 they sided with the boss of the Baby Loup day-care center in a Parisian suburb, who fired a young childcare worker, Fatima Afif, for wearing a headscarf.

This "republican secularism," which is a cover for anti-Muslim prejudices, has nothing to do with the principle of secularism established by the French Revolution of 1789 and which we uphold to this day. As we explained in our article "Women and Immigration in France" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 57, Winter 2002-2003):

> "The French state *deformed* the goals and values of the French Revolution with this attack on these Muslim girls. Under the *ancien régime* of the French king, France was known as 'the eldest daughter of the Church.' The principle of secularism in the French Revolution came from the need to protect the freedom to express ideas and to free society from the hands of the Catholic church. That this principle is used today by a Catholic majority to oppress a Muslim minority in French society is a cruel irony of history. It underscores the degree to which the French bourgeoisie in the epoch of capitalist decay has degenerated from the class that led the 1789 Revolution, a historic watershed in the struggle for human emancipation."

While we fight against the ban on the veil, the Ligue Trotskyste de France has always opposed the headscarf and the veil, which represent a reactionary social program for keeping women within the narrow confines of the family and the home, and in a position of servitude. Likewise, we oppose the trappings of other religions, all of which promote the family, which is the basis of women's oppression.

In France, the 1905 law [on the separation of church and state] went some way toward the separation of church and state, but Catholicism remains powerful and privileged. One-sixth of the school system is private and in the hands of the Catholic church, but it is funded by the state. The ruling class uses religion to reinforce social conservatism and sanctify capitalist class rule as seen in the recent anti-gay and anti-abortion mobilizations led by the Church. By 2010, "republican secularism" had become so synonymous with anti-Muslim racism that [FN leader] Marine Le Pen made the "Islamic danger" the central issue in her party's propaganda, arguing that Islam was incompatible with the "secular values" at the core of the French Republic.

The "Muslim problem" is in reality a fabrication of the French bourgeoisie and above all of its social-democratic lackeys. In the early 1980s, there was a series of important strikes in the French auto industry. Immigrant workers, mainly from North Africa, spearheaded these powerful workers mobilizations which shook the SP-PCF popular-front government. The government sought to break the strikes by using the classic tactic of divide-and-rule and denounced the strikers, claiming that they were being manipulated by the ayatollahs and other religious leaders.

Up until the 1970s, the bourgeoisie needed extra labor power and brought hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers into the country, particularly from North Africa. But in recent decades, deindustrialization has made jobs scarce, a situation that has only gotten worse with the economic crisis. Today, with widespread unemployment, the capitalists consider the children and grandchildren of these immigrant workers a surplus population from whose labor little profit can be extracted.

Back in the 1980s, these youth demonstrated for equality, most notably at the 1983 "great march of the *beurs*" ["*beurs*" referred to children of North African immigrants]. Their hopes were cruelly dashed by Mitterrand's social democrats and their cynical ploys such as SOS-Racisme; as a result, some of them turned to religion. This is the origin of the Islamic headscarf affair in the schools, which dates back to 1989. Since that time, the French bourgeoisie has continually added to its bans on Muslim dress, while condemning Muslims' so-called failure to integrate. Today the anti-Muslim witchhunt has reached such a point that the likes of Eric Zemmour [a right-wing anti-Muslim journalist and author] are given press columns and airtime to argue for the mass expulsion of France's estimated four million Muslims. It is clearly the fascists who benefit from such calls, and without a doubt they will turn against the Jews as well, despite the services rendered by individuals like Zemmour [who is Jewish].

AFP

December 2013: Demonstration against French nuclear energy firm Areva in Niamey, Niger. French military intervention in neighboring Mali earlier that year aimed to secure French interests, including supply of uranium for nuclear power plants.

LO claims that Chirac's 2004 law protects young women. In fact, racist expulsions as a result of this law can only serve to deepen these young women's oppression, driving them out of the public schools and into religious schools or even keeping them at home! It is the capitalist state which is the main source of oppression of these women! In reality, LO reveals its touching faith in this racist French state, which it portrays as a bulwark for protecting young women against anti-woman (Arab) reactionaries. In 2012, [LO spokesperson] Nathalie Arthaud explained her position on this question: "The law, far from excluding girls, allows them all to come to school and allows those who don't want to wear the veil to retain that realm of freedom."

Schools: Key Prop of the Capitalist State

Today, even Arthaud probably wouldn't dare claim that public schools are a "realm of freedom" when eight-, nine- and ten-year-old children have been reported to the police, suspected of "justifying terrorism." Dozens of teenagers facing the same charge have also been reported to and questioned by the cops. Kids as young as 13 can face criminal prosecution. After two of his young students were arrested, one teacher stated:

> "I believe that placing them in custody for remarks which are certainly shocking, but are still only words, is totally out of proportion and it is not educational! How can you talk to them about the Republic, democracy and the rule of law after all this? I am deeply upset by what is happening to these kids. I talked to my student. He is what you would call a big mouth. He refused to talk about what happened while he was in custody. He is devastated."

Le Bolchévik

Union protest at Citroën-Aulnay auto plant, 1982. Immigrant workers played key role in 1982-83 auto strikes. In response, government launched racist campaign against foreign-born workers.

We demand that all charges be dropped immediately—for youth and adults alike. Free all those who have been jailed!

In mid January, Education Minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem announced that the government was planning to strengthen republican values. From the beginning of the next school year, teachers, students and parents will have to sign a "charter of secularism" (and one can only imagine what punishment is being dreamed up for the heretics who refuse to sign). One thousand teachers will be trained to preach "secularism," and there will be a special day in schools every year, on December 9, to celebrate "secular" mass. There are also plans afoot to implement and strengthen the authority of public school institutions with republican rites and symbols such as the *Marseillaise* and the tricolor flag being taught as early as the first year of primary school. In contrast, there will be no extra money for special education for students with difficulties, nor any money for more teachers to reduce class sizes or replace absent teachers. But there is plenty of money to teach kids in the ghetto schools to "conform" and respect authority from a tender age.

Schools are key institutions for maintaining capitalist rule. The bourgeoisie

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Greece...

(continued from page 12)

seeks to be the pressure on the streets that will push Syriza to the left. In addition to the SEK, Antarsya is also home to other ex-Trotskyists, ex-Stalinists and Maoists. In the January elections, Antarsya ran in a bloc with Plan B, a small split from Syriza. Plan B is no more socialist than Syriza. What passes for radicalism in Plan B's programme is a request that the parliament consider adopting direct democracy—to make Greece more like Switzerland. Of course, we know that Switzerland is a paradise—for the super-wealthy! While Antarsya and Plan B ran their own candidates, they were very careful not to oppose a vote to Syriza. That is why we said "no vote to Antarsya!"

One particular anecdote stands out to me. During the election campaign we were distributing our "Vote KKE" leaflet at a busy street corner in central Athens. Antarsya and the Communist Party also had leafleters. There was a Syriza office just a block away, and they were very hostile to our leaflet. I noticed, in contrast, that one of the Antarsya members was over with the Syriza guys chatting and laughing and being very comradely. So when she came back I made a snarky comment about their supposed "independence from Syriza" and she shoots back: "Well, just watch, we'll be striking in the streets right after the election."

Today Antarsya is indeed in the streets, but they aren't striking against the government, they're supporting it. They've mobilised for pro-government, national unity protests in the last couple of weeks, where thousands rallied under Greek flags. Under the guise of opposing the Troika, these protests line up Greek working people in "solidarity" with their class enemy at home—the Greek capitalists. When Syriza talks about seeking European solidarity it is talking about solidarity with the bourgeois regimes of Italy, France, and Spain—once Podemos is in power. It is not referring to international working class solidarity—which must be forged around Europe-wide opposition to the EU.

Down With the EU!

We of the International Communist League have opposed the EU since its formation. Dominated primarily by Germany, the EU exists centrally to advance the interests of these imperialist powers. Together with their junior partners, they use the EU to subordinate dependent states, such as Greece and many East European countries. Equally important to remember is that the EU is a means of increasing the rate of exploitation of the workers in imperialist European countries as well. Workers in Germany have seen their wages slashed and living conditions undercut in the name of profitability. Today the French working class is facing EU-mandated austerity carried out by the Socialist Party government of François Hollande. In Britain, which is in the EU but not the currency bloc, the government has launched massive cuts to healthcare, welfare and housing. In Greece the attacks have been extreme. The healthcare system is so inadequate that Doctors Without Borders is operating in major cities like Athens. In the capital, 25 per cent of school children go hungry, and the universities are so strapped that they lack the cash to pay even basic operating costs. Any *Guardian* or *New York Times* article will tell you: mass unemployment, mothers too poor to give birth in a hospital, children and pensioners rummaging through rubbish bins for food.

AP

Economic crisis has spurred growth of fascists. Nazi salutes at Golden Dawn rally, Athens, February 2014.

The unions have been a special target of the EU imperialists and of the Greek bourgeoisie. Collective bargaining was shredded under the EU/IMF memorandum, and key sectors of union power have been weakened, most famously the port of Piraeus, half of which was privatised and where there is no union. The years-long economic depression has decimated the already small Greek working class. When I first visited Greece in 2012, I visited a picket line of striking workers at a steel plant outside Athens. When we met with them they had already been on strike for over 200 days. We talked to the workers there about their strike and published solidarity statements in our international press [see *WV* No. 1005, 6 July 2012]. The strike was launched after the plant's owner, a major Greek industrialist, threatened mass layoffs and wage cuts that were permitted under the EU-IMF memorandum. PAME, the KKE's trade-union front, helped organise the strike and the workers had led a long, militant and popular strike. However, they were isolated and threatened with state repression. About a month after our visit riot cops launched a massive attack on the picket lines and broke the strike. Crucial in the strike's defeat was that there were no sympathy strikes in other steel plants, nor was there an attempt to broaden their struggle to other layers of the working class. As of 2014 the plant was closed, and the remaining workers had been laid off. The attacks on workers in Greece should serve as a warning. The workers of Europe must recognise that the EU is using Greece as a test case for what it has in store for all of them.

One of the reasons we offered critical support to the KKE is that it opposes the EU. But the Greek Stalinists' opposition to the EU comes from their nationalist perspective. Indeed, much of the left in Greece has some rhetoric about Greece being better off outside the eurozone and EU, even as their comrades in other parts of Europe explicitly promote the idea of a reformed, democratic EU—a "social Europe." In contrast our opposition to the EU is internationalist—we are for revolutionary struggle by workers across Europe against this imperialist consortium.

Recognising that the euro would be an instrument of the EU imperialists, we opposed its introduction. We noted that a common European currency was not viable in the long-term. Ordinarily, each country has its own currency, and a debtor country can get some relief and regain competitiveness by devaluing its currency. But this is not possible in a currency union like the eurozone. The imperialists, centrally the German bourgeoisie, demand that debtor countries slash wages, pensions and welfare in return for aid to the banks. There is no way out for debtor countries under this setup. In the eurozone, Greece is akin to a patient on life support, and the machine keeping it breathing is the cash provided by the Troika. Mass unemployment and hunger were deliberate policies enacted by the Troika and local rulers to cow the working class and to attempt to make Greece "profitable" again, which means driving up the rate of exploitation. The EU imperialists, centrally Germany, have treated Greece like a colony, even getting rid of bourgeois politicians like former PM George Papandreou, who made the mistake of proposing to get a popular mandate for massive austerity. For years domestic political decisions have been vetoed by Berlin and Brussels.

The sharp cuts in public spending have had a predictable effect—the Greek economy has contracted by 25 per cent since the beginning of the crisis. A smaller economy means less tax revenue, thereby increasing the deficit and prompting demands for more austerity. As we pointed out in our election statement, a Greek exit from the EU as the result of workers struggles would be a step forward, but not a solution in itself. The economic crisis of the imperialist system cannot be resolved within the borders of one country, particularly in small, dependent Greece with its low level of industry and resources. International socialist revolution is the only solution to unemployment, wage cuts, imperialist war and the other depredations of decaying capitalism.

Nationalism: Poison for Workers Struggle

Don't be fooled by Syriza's name, which stands for Coalition of the Radical Left. It is anything ***but*** that, both in its current incarnation and in its origins. It originated, in part, from a right-wing split from the Communist Party by anti-Soviet elements. The forces that became Syriza spent the last decade immersed in the Social Forums, student struggles and populist "indignados" protests—the last of which were explicitly anti-working class. In 2004 Syriza was formed as a coalition including bourgeois and petit-bourgeois political forces like environmentalists and ex-PASOK members.

As for Syriza's transformation into a party, its founding conference in 2013 adopted a resolution, which is a dead letter today, where one of the most radical demands was to nationalise the banks. It proclaims itself to be for the *laos*, the people, of which the working class is only one sector. It was not built by workers organisations, unions, but rather emerged as a voice for the petty bourgeoisie.

In our January statement we called Syriza a petty-bourgeois party because it had not yet gained ruling-class support. That is no longer the case. Before the elections the main bourgeois daily newspaper *Kathimerini* ran editorials about "dealing with the Syriza virus" (ekathimerini.com, 24 September 2014) and accused Syriza of gambling with the country's economic development. But a few days after the elections, *Kathimerini* warned right-wing New Democracy, its former favourite, that it "must throw its support behind any government decisions that are for the overall good." Syriza worked very hard to win the support of a wing of the bourgeoisie. In 2013 Tsipras promised to maintain the notorious tax scheme whereby the monumentally wealthy Greek shipowners pay

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maintains elite schools to ensure quality education for its children and to train the managers and technicians it needs to administer the capitalist system. When it comes to the working class and the poor, the capitalists seek to spend on education only what they calculate they can get back in profits. These youth are taught to comply with bourgeois authority or face expulsion.

Once out of school, many *banlieue* youth are faced with having no job security, or with unemployment and prison. Hollande has now announced that, starting in June, youth can sign up for "voluntary civil service," which would nevertheless be "universal." This scheme was originally dreamed up by Sarkozy, and Hollande now plans to extend it. For half the minimum wage and over a period of six or 12 months, young people will be able to help prop up the woefully understaffed public services by working in schools, retirement homes, hospitals and government administration. This is a gift to the capitalists which will drive down wages and working conditions fought for by the unions, destroy jobs and increase competition among the poorest. It is also a bid by Hollande to reverse the unemployment trend, a goal he has vowed to achieve if he is to run for president again in 2017. What's needed is a massive program of hiring in the public services, with equal pay for equal work and permanent work contracts!

Nearly ten years ago, at the time of the 2005 *banlieue* revolt, we called on the workers movement to defend the *banlieue* youth. We do so again today in the face of the government's holy war against Muslim youth. To fight the policy of the French bourgeoisie and its reformist lackeys of continually pitting Muslims against Jews, whites against non-whites, men against women, heterosexuals against homosexuals, what is posed is the need for a revolutionary workers party, a tribune of the people fighting for the unity of the working class and for workers to take the lead of all the oppressed in a struggle for socialist revolution.

The multiracial working class has enormous social power—its labor produces the capitalists' enormous profits. When the workers decide to collectively withdraw their labor through strike action, then the profit tap is turned off, the transport network shuts down and the lights go out. This social power must be wielded and linked with the anger of dispossessed ghetto youth in a fight to overthrow this rotting system.

We live in a reactionary period—the epoch of imperialist decay. But the only way to fight for a future for working class youth today is to study the lessons of the history of class struggle and try to apply them. Lenin studied the lessons of the Paris Commune in order to lead the Russian Revolution to victory. Likewise, today we study the lessons of the Russian Revolution to prepare for the inevitable future outbreaks of class struggle. We seek to build a revolutionary party, part of a reforged Fourth International, grounded in the Marxist understanding that this racist capitalist system must be overthrown through socialist revolution. ■

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Greece...

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little tax. He also met with leaders of Greek industry last year, promising them a better business climate with fewer obstacles to profit-making.

Much of the left in Greece and internationally expressed dismay at Syriza's alliance with the right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks (ANEL). Such surprise has to be deeply cynical. Syriza and the Independent Greeks have been courting each other for some time. They had an ongoing parliamentary alliance stretching back to 2013. That year, Syriza sent a representative to the Independent Greeks congress, and they agreed to a common front to bail out little brother (Greek) Cyprus. This alliance is useful for Syriza and its boosters, as it allows them to blame their backtracking and lies on the coalition. But, actually, there is *no* conflict of class interest between the Independent Greeks and Syriza, because both parties share a desire to promote Greek nationalism and national interests. For the Independent Greeks this means expelling immigrants from the country, accusing the tiny Jewish population of Greece (descendants of survivors of the Holocaust) of not paying taxes, and otherwise promoting horrible nationalism and anti-gay bigotry.

Knowing that its promises are largely empty. Syriza uses nationalist populism as an ideological prop for its rule. For years, Greece has been swept by almost daily strikes and protests against the government and its policies. But today you have flag-waving, *pro-government* protests, a confirmation of Syriza's usefulness to the Greek capitalists in deflecting anger away from them. One of our comrades noted that this is the first time in her life she has ever seen pro-government demonstrations.

Tsipras has denounced Turkey for infringing on Cyprus' sovereignty, and the Greek military announced last week that it will be carrying out military exercises with Cyprus, Israel and Egypt. Fascist Golden Dawn announced that they will support Syriza measures against privatisations as well as anything Syriza does to oppose sanctions against Russia. While Greece's subordination to the imperialists understandably whips up national sentiment against the Troika, the solution for working people is not nationalism, in which is expressed the lie that there is a common interest between Greek workers and their capitalist exploiters at home.

Rather than pointing out to the working class that the Syriza-Independent Greek nationalist alliance is simply an alliance of left and right bourgeois populists, the left has turned its fire against the Greek Communist party for refusing to ally with Syriza. We called for a vote to the KKE not least because it had *refused* in advance to rule with Syriza. The KKE correctly said: "Reject the blackmail and lies of ND-Syriza, the people have bled enough for the EU-plutocracy." An electoral alliance between the KKE and Syriza would be a classic popular front, or alliance between a reformist workers party (the KKE) and a bourgeois party (Syriza). When the workers are tied to the capitalists by their misleaders, as in China in the 1920s, Spain and France in the 1930s and Chile in the early 1970s, the result is not socialism but the disillusionment and disarmament of socialist-minded workers, the defeat of revolutionary opportunities and, very often, the rise of extreme right-wing reaction.

Reuters

Athens, November 2014: Dock workers protest against privatization scheme for Greek ports.

The workers movement of Greece has its own bitter memories of such betrayals. In the Second World War the Communist Party's military forces led a successful resistance struggle against the German occupation and controlled nearly the whole country by 1944. However, the KKE, following Stalin's diktat, handed power back to the British-backed capitalist forces. The Greek bourgeoisie murdered thousands of Communists after winning the years-long civil war, and the KKE remained more or less underground until after the fall in 1974 of the military dictatorship. I urge you to read the current issue of the ICL's theoretical journal *Spartacist*, which has an in-depth article explaining the origins of the KKE's popular-frontism and Stalin's nationalist programme of "socialism in one country."

There *is* a mass reformist workers party in Greece with tens of thousands of working-class members and deep trade-union links. It is the Communist Party, not Syriza, that maintains the allegiance of militant Greek workers. The KKE is one of the few remaining mass Stalinist parties that has refused to dissociate itself from the Soviet Union. Today, the KKE claims to have turned its back on "coalitions" with the bourgeoisie and to have studied and corrected what it calls "mistakes" made when it did participate in bourgeois governments at various junctures. We called for critical support to the KKE, meaning that although we urged people to vote for it, we didn't shy away from or disappear our differences with its Stalinist programme. We sought to use the tactic of critical support as a way to expose the reformist programme of the KKE. Our critical support allowed us to argue with KKE workers and youth against the party's *nationalism* and *populism*. And we had lots to argue about.

Trotskyist Group of Greece

Piraeus, January 11: Communist Party (KKE) flags together with Greek national flags during rally for KKE's 96th anniversary. TGG election statement called for no vote to Syriza, critical support to KKE.

The KKE views as sacrosanct the Greek borders, which were extended a hundred years ago in a series of fratricidal wars. Back in 2013 the Communist Party newspaper ran an article calling to strengthen the war industries in the name of national defence. In the last election the KKE ran NATO admiral Giannis Douniadakis as a candidate. This was an act of fealty to the capitalist state, and we said: "No Vote to Douniadakis!" The KKE denies that there is a Slav Macedonian minority in Greece, never mind that it should have the right to separate. But the democratic demand for the right of self-determination for national minorities is vital for a revolutionary party in Greece to uphold, and we raise it prominently. Because of the national conflicts in the Balkans and the imperialist subordination of the region, for the working class a Socialist Federation of the Balkans is the only way forward.

The KKE and the Capitalist State

The Communist Party's pronouncements *can* sound like Marxism. In the latest issue of its theoretical journal *Communist Review* the KKE wrote, "The new power must smash the bourgeois state. No organ and its mechanism can be reformed and transferred to the conditions of socialist construction." There was also a very interesting letter by the KKE in a recent issue of the *Morning Star*, newspaper of the British Communist Party. The letter was a rebuttal of the international fake left's criticism of the KKE for not joining with Syriza in government. The KKE makes a number of correct arguments against Syriza and its left tails, including that Syriza "accepts the strategy of the EU and Capitalism" (morningstaronline.co.uk, 23 January).

The KKE's current posture can only partially obscure what is at bottom a class-collaborationist Stalinist programme. In fact, despite its left rhetoric, in practice the KKE *does* administer the capitalist state on the local level. There is a KKE mayor of Patras, Greece's third-largest city, for example. Our international views it as a communist principle not to run for or accept executive office—mayor, president, sheriff etc. These are offices where, if in power, a communist would be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the capitalist state, including the local police, of course.

We distributed thousands of copies of our critical support statement, including to rallies and marches of the KKE and its youth group. We had a range of reactions from KKEers, some thanked us while others found it almost unbelievable that a Trotskyist group would be voting for the KKE. The Douniadakis candidacy, which I mentioned earlier, was a hot topic of debate, as were the democratic rights of national minorities in Greece and the question of the police, who the KKE has argued can be won to the side of the working class. We discussed with KKE students who asked us to sit down with them and explain what we meant by our criticisms of the KKE's populism and nationalism. These youth were impressed with our organisation's principled defence of the USSR and East Germany during counterrevolution, and our call in 1979, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

You might think that every so-called socialist organisation in Greece has an orientation to the KKE, with its mass support in the working class, left-sounding Stalinist politics and mass demonstrations of tens of thousands. But they don't. In fact, when our comrades distributed our critical support statement to an Antarsya election meeting, SEK leaders expressed disgust that we would call for a vote for *Stalinists*. That's right, the Cliffites, who have voted for everyone from Greece's bourgeois PASOK to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, were horrified by the idea of voting for the Communist Party. The left complains constantly of the KKE's sectarianism. In fact, it is anti-Communism that holds Antarsya together, with its hodgepodge membership of ex-Stalinist, fake-Trotskyist and Maoist organisations. None of these groups defended the Soviet Union against capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-1992. We did! We fought on the ground there, and earlier in East Ger-

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many, for unconditional military defence against imperialism and internal counter-revolution and for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and install regimes of workers democracy.

For Workers Struggle Against Fascism!

I would like to conclude with some comments on the rise of the fascist Golden Dawn, and the strategy needed to stop them. Golden Dawn now holds the third most seats in parliament, hehind only Syriza and New Democracy. As you may know, one of its supporters stabhed and killed the leftist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013, and fascists are also responsible for other hrutal killings and assaults on immigrants and leftists. Golden Dawn, with its Nazi symbolism and extreme nationalism, is seen hy many lumpen and petty bourgeois as the only "radical" alternative to the system that brought on the economic crisis. In many working-class areas once dominated by the KKE, such as the port area of Athens, Golden Dawn has fed off years of hunger and unemployment.

This situation urgently cries out for *moss, united-front mobilisotions centred on the power of the orgonised proletariot to stop the fascists.* The capitalist state keeps the fascists in reserve in order to use them to crush the workers when bourgeois class rule is threatened. It is therefore suicidal for leftists and workers to have any illusions that the institutions of the capitalist state can be used to stop the fascists. While the left hailed the arrest of more than a dozen Golden Dawn leaders in 2013, *we* warned that the very laws used by the state to go after the fascists would eventually be used to suppress the working class and oppressed.

The struggle for a workers united front against fascism does not mean that revolutionaries should ditch their programme to lash up with reformists and bourgeois forces. We advocate a united front premised on full freedom of criticism and political independence for the various organisations involved. In this way, revolutionaries seek to expose the reformist misleaders and win workers to the revolutionary programme. This is how Trotsky advocated the use of the united-Iront tactic in the early 1930s in Germany. The German Communist Party's refusal to demand that the reformist Social Democracy join them in a workers united front against the Nazis allowed Hitler to come to power without a shot being fired.

The KKE itself has been attacked by Golden Dawn, but its leaders have ollered no sustained resistance to the fascist threat. Shortly after Fyssas' murder there was a large demonstration organised by the KKE's union front PAME that stopped Golden Dawn from rallying. But this was essentially a one-off event. The KKE's programme against fascism is expressed in its newspaper *Rizospastis*, where it has appealed to "isolate" the fascists ideologically and to use the "weapon of the vote" against them. The demo after Fyssas' murder hinted at the real strength of the working class, but this strength has been held in check by the KKE's leadership. The KKE argues that only socialism can stop fascism. It is true that ultimately only the workers in power can end the conditions that give rise to fascism, but for the KKE this is just a cover for its refusal to mobilise against the fascists,

EPA

February 21: Migrants at Amygdaleza detention center, near Athens, during protest to demand closure of detention camps after a young Pakistani detainee was driven to suicide by wretched conditions there.

and encourages passivity in the working class towards the deadly threat the fascists pose today.

In the fall of 2013, shortly before Fyssas' murder, I witnessed the largest working-class demonstration I have ever seen. There were tens of thousands of workers, mobilised by the Communist Party and its trade-union front PAME. Many were waving red hammer-and-sickle flags, marching in close military formation through the streets of Athens to the U.S. Embassy to protest what seemed like the imminent bombing of Syria. Two months after Fyssas was killed, more than a thousand Hiter-loving scum marched right up to the Greek parliament in central Athens and rallied there unopposed. Had tens of thousands of workers been mobilised in the streets by the unions and the left, this fascist provocation could have been stopped. So our propaganda for a united front is not abstract in the least. One must only remember that this year is the 70th anniversary of the end of the Nazi Holocaust to be aware of what is at stake.

The SEK in Greece is a prominent organiser of KEERFA, an anti-fascist front group. We attended a KEERFA meeting during last year's November 17th commemoration. This event is held annually to commemorate the students killed by the ruling military junta during a pro-democracy protest at the Athens Polytechnic in 1973. The commemoration draws thousands of Greeks from all walks of life, from schoolchildren with their teachers to aged veterans of the Civil War. Every left organisation in the country sets up literature tables inside the campus. We attended the event held by KEERFA to discuss the progress of their anti-fascist campaign. The main speaker, a public leader of KEERFA, spoke at length about the nature of fascism, the struggle for immigrant rights, etc. All of this led to a final, resounding crescendo: we must march in the streets—to pressure the government to throw the fascists in jail!

There can be no greater expression of illusions in the capitalist state than this demand. It is suicidal in any capitalist country to rely on the state to deal with the fascists, but in Greece it should be even more apparent because it is widely known that half of the cops support Golden Dawn. The last government's health minister was known for using a homemade axe to hunt down leftist students when he was a leader of a right-wing youth group. A supporter of the TGG intervened in the meeting from the floor. She really shook the room up. She explained why we call for the united front and then exposed the illusions in the cops and courts pushed by the SEK and KEERFA. She went after the SEK for being anti-Communist, and for being so repelled by our call for a workers united front with the Communist Party. She got a fair bit of applause after her remarks.

Well, of course KEERFA and the SEK are absolutely thrilled that Syriza was elected, because now they *really* push illusions that the state will take care of the fascist threat. The SEK calls on Syriza to continue the trials of Golden Dawn, root out their supporters in the state apparatus, and "disarm the police." A recent anti-Turkey provocation launched by the new government illustrates the depth of these reformist illusions. Days after the election Panos Kammenos, the new defence minister, staged a nationalist anti-Turkey provocation by lowering a wreath over the Imia islets, where three Greek soldiers died in a helicopter crash in 1996. These are pieces of rock whose ownership is disputed by Greece and Turkey, and every year the fascists hold an Imia rally on 31 January.

This year's counter-demonstration in Athens against the fascist rally was a crystallisation of the toothless, liberal, anti-fascist "common Iront" against fascism hailed by Antarsya and KEERFA. This demo, the first since the election of Syriza, saw the left rally hours before and in a different location from the fascists, obviously with no intention of stopping Golden Dawn. Everyone from the Syriza youth to Antarsya to anarchists was represented. Much was made of the fact that there was a minimal police presence. Of course, had this been a serious mobilisation to stop the fascists, you can be sure that hundreds of riot cops would have been dispatched to protect Golden Dawn.

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party

No capitalist government, including one led by Syriza, will he able to satisfy the desperate demands of the Greek masses for jobs, healthcare and pensions. In these conditions, the fascists will continue to grow. It is necessary for the Greek working class to come to the fore in militant struggle of all those facing ruin by the capitalist crisis. A class-struggle response to the populist demagogy of the fascists is needed. In a country where the unionised working class has been decimated by the economic crisis, a massive campaign to organise the unorganised is needed. In Greece, immigrants are murdered in the street, detained in squalid camps, or pushed into the sea to drown before even reaching Europe's shores. Against deportations and state repression against undocumented migrants, we call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. In response to massive, sustained unemployment in a society where a whole generation has never held a job, we demand jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! tn a society where the pitiful minimum wage leaves the working poor to burn firewood to heat their apartments, have their electricity cut off, and send their children hungry to school, we demand a sliding scale of wages to keep up with the cost of living! In contrast to Syriza's timid begging for scraps from the imperialists, we say: Repudiate the debt! Nationalise the banks!

This struggle would point to the need for the working class to completely expropriate the bourgeoisie and establish its own government through socialist revolution. It will be necessary to extend any revolution in a dependent European country like Greece to the imperialist centres of Berlin, Paris, and London. Our programme is for the Socialist United States of Europe. I would like to conclude by quoting from an article written by our German comrades. They wrote: "The Socialist United States of Europe, in conjunction with the conquest of proletarian power in the U.S., Japan and throughout the world, would lay the basis lor a real international division of labour in a planned economy, thus enormously increasing the productivity of society. Establishing the genuine equality of the peoples of Europe, it would eradicate the source of the imperialist wars that have brought Europe so many times near extinction" ["Economic Crisis Rips Europe," *WV* No. 992, 9 Decemher 2011]. Central to our perspective as Trotskyists is the reforging of the Fourth International as the world party of proletarian revolution, the task the International Communist League has set for itself.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Syriza Tries to Appease EU Imperialists

Greece: European Union Turns Screws

Scholz Press

Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras of Syriza with German chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, March 23.

On February 20, less than a month after being propelled to victory in the Greek elections on the basis of its anti-austerity rhetoric, the Syriza-led government of Alexis Tsipras caved in to the diktat of the imperialist European Union (EU) and accepted a four-month extension of the EU's extortionate "bailout." Syriza agreed to come up with a new package of austerity measures, but more than a month has passed without any new austerity agreement being reached. Instead there is a tense stand-off and Greece's relationship with Germany in particular has grown increasingly venomous. The European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—the rapacious Troika (now called "the institutions" as a face-saving concession to Syriza)—are increasingly frustrated with Athens, leading to renewed speculation about a Greek exit from the euro single currency.

In the January 25 elections, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece opposed on principle any vote for Syriza—which pledged from the outset to keep Greece within the EU—because it is a capitalist party. The "radical" Greek government's conciliation of the Troika fully vindicates our characterization of this bourgeois, pro-EU party. In a January 15 statement for the elections, our comrades explained that "the EU's purpose is to enable the imperialist powers of Europe, led by Germany, to subordinate weaker capitalist countries like Greece and impose savage austerity on working people throughout Europe, including in Germany" (see "Greece: European Union Austerity Elections," *WV* No. 1060, 23 January).

We reprint below a presentation by a TGG spokesman at a February 21 forum in London held by the Spartacist League/Britain, which published it in *Workers Hammer*, No. 230, Spring 2015.

* * *

WORKERS HAMMER

I will be speaking about the recent Greek elections and what the rise of Syriza means for the working class and oppressed in Greece and Europe. Despite what you might have heard, Syriza's election does not represent any kind of step towards socialism. We in the TGG called for no vote to Syriza. As we explained in our statement for the Greek elections, our perspective is the fight for workers revolution in Greece and internationally. We opposed Syriza because it is committed to keeping Greece in the imperialist European Union (EU), which is a pledge for more hunger and joblessness; moreover Syriza is not a workers party and does not in any way represent the interests of the working class. Its programme is bourgeois and its base is among the petty-bourgeoisie—shopkeepers, farmers and professionals—a layer with no independent class interests that is generally drawn behind the bourgeoisie under capitalism. We called instead for a vote to the Communist Party (KKE), a party which is based in the working class but which has a reformist programme. The KKE opposed the imperialist EU and any support to Syriza.

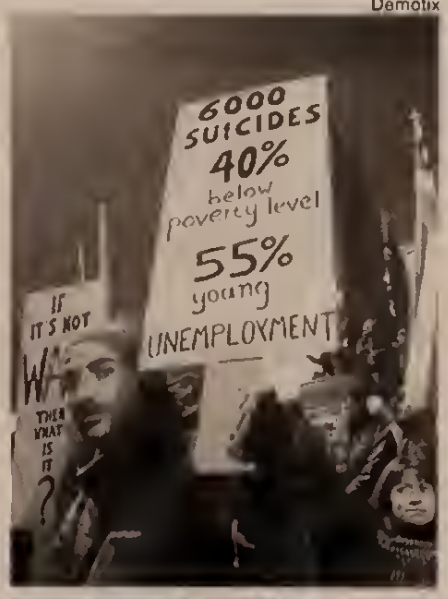
In the 25 January election, Syriza achieved an overwhelming victory, winning 36 per cent of the vote. The key factor was that Syriza promised to ease up on the grinding austerity faced by Greek working people since the world economic crisis began in 2007-2008. This austerity has been imposed by the imperialists who dominate the EU. They have demanded savage attacks on the workers and poor in exchange for loans to bail out the blood-sucking banks. The pro-EU Syriza seeks merely to renegotiate the terms of imperialist oppression of Greece, by getting a break on the terms of repayment of the massive government debt.

Nonetheless, there are real illusions in Syriza among layers of the workers and the oppressed who are desperate for any form of relief. Furthermore, the fact that an election was won by a party other than the two main capitalist parties, PASOK (the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement) and New Democracy (ND), who have shared power for 40 years, is seen as a blow to the Greek oligarchs and their system of patronage and corruption. There is also a sense of national pride that a party the German government explicitly did not want in power won an election in Greece.

Since 2012, Syriza has been abandoning many of its more left-sounding demands and currying favour with industrialists and bankers. Before the election, Syriza jettisoned its opposition to NATO and dropped its call for a debt write-off. Since the election, it has promised not to renationalise any of the industries privatised by the previous government. Two years ago Syriza demanded the rejection of the austerity memorandum of the Troika. Now it is willing to accept 70 per cent of the austerity measures. While I was on my way to London to give this forum, the Syriza government capitulated to the EU's demands. It has now agreed to extend the hated bailout in exchange for implementing even more austerity, the very thing it was elected to overturn.

Why Greek Trotskyists Said "No Vote to Syriza!"

Demotix



Reuters

Grim reality of austerity-hit Greece: Placard at February 11 pro-government rally in Athens (left). Desperate Greeks scramble for food handouts, April 2014 (below).

In Greece the TGG is the only organisation outside of the Communist Party that describes itself as revolutionary Marxist and *opposes* the new capitalist Syriza government. The Socialist Workers Party of Greece (SEK), co-thinkers of the party of the same name here in Britain, argues that this government is a "big step forward" for the working class (socialistworker.co.uk, 6 January). The fake-Trotskyist Greek Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK) called before the election for a "powerful United Front" from the KKE to Syriza and including everyone in-between, in order to "smash... imperialist domination" and open the way to "universal human emancipation" (eek.gr, 28 December 2014). In other words, for them a Syriza government represents a transition to socialism. The Xekinima group, which is affiliated with Britain's Socialist Party [and Socialist Alternative in the U.S.], said that Syriza "can open a new epoch for the working people" and begin the "counterattack of the workers movement" against Greek and international capital (xekinima.org, 26 January). These leftists are now salivating at the prospect of parties similar to Syriza coming to power elsewhere in Europe, especially Podemos in Spain.

I read in the paper last week that Kenneth Clarke, British former Tory chancellor, called Syriza "latter-day Trotskyites." He intended this to be a derisive statement about Syriza's extreme radicalism. But as a supporter of a genuine Trotskyist organisation, I really was insulted to be compared with these pro-EU liberals. You don't need to know very much about the new Greek government to know that Syriza is not about to form workers defence militias, suppress the fascist-infested police, expropriate the key sectors of the Greek economy, and begin to rule through soviets. Syriza is very open about what it seeks to do: it wants to work within the bounds of the EU and Greek parliament. It wants to make Greek capitalism profitable again and it wants to protect the interests of the shipowners and banks. Syriza thinks the best way to do this is to put a more humanitarian facade on the imperialist EU and system of capitalist exploitation.

Most of the Greek left has jumped onto the Syriza handwagon. Some are ***inside*** Syriza, including the Greek comrades of *Socialist Appeal*, which is part of the International Marxist Tendency founded by the late Ted Grant. Others, like the SEK, belong to Antarsya, a coalition that ran its own candidates in the election but

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1066

17 April 2015

Obama's Hatchet Man Beats "Progressive" Rival

Chicago: Democrats' Segregation City Elections

We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The Chicago mayoral elections drew national attention after incumbent Rahm Emanuel failed to win re-election on February 24, forcing a runoff. The mere fact that Emanuel, former chief of staff of Barack Obama's White House, could not get a first-round knockout in Obama's hometown was, as the *Chicago Tribune* put it, a "national political embarrassment." Emanuel is widely despised for having pushed through brutal austerity measures in his first term as mayor of "Segregation City," so named for its entrenched residential and school segregation. Most notoriously, he closed nearly 50 schools, overwhelmingly in black and Latino neighborhoods, as part of carrying out Obama's "school reform" policies.

The once seemingly invincible Cook County Democratic Party machine has not been so for years and can no longer turn out the living and the dead to the polls as it did in its heyday. More than ever, the city's Democratic Party electoral apparatus is dependent on the trade-union officialdom. In the face of widespread disaffection with the arrogant labor-hating mayor, many prominent union leaders along with the reformist leftists who tail them rushed to promote Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, who finished second in February. Castigating Emanuel as "Mayor 1 Percent" and a "corporate Democrat," they worked overtime to paint Garcia as some kind of alternative. Central to this effort was the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), which had waged a widely popular nine-day strike in 2012.

Many did not buy the idea that Garcia would be any better than Emanuel, who handily won re-election in the April 7 runoff. Despite all the hype, the voter turnout was 40 percent. Garcia's main qualification was that he was not well known and hence didn't have so much to live down. But "Chuy" is as much an enemy of working people as his much better funded opponent for mayor or any other Democrat. As floor leader on the Cook County Board of Commissioners, Garcia served as hatchet man in his own right, pushing through attacks on public workers. In the campaign, Garcia vowed that he would wring concessions from the unions more effectively through negotiations rather than Emanuel's ham-fisted provocations. He also promised to hire 1,000 more cops.

Last summer, there was much ballyhoo about the possibility that CTU president Karen Lewis would run for mayor against Emanuel. But then Lewis became ill, and she persuaded Garcia to

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Reuters photos

Top: President Obama endorses Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel's re-election bid, February 19. Bottom: Democratic Party hack Jesus "Chuy" Garcia at campaign rally, January 15.

Free Purvi Patel Now!

Imprisoned for Miscarriage in Indiana

Breaking new ground in anti-woman cruelty, on March 30 an Indiana court sentenced Purvi Patel to prison for *20 years* for having a miscarriage. This is the first time anyone in the U.S. has been convicted and sentenced for "feticide," a bogus crime based on anti-scientific nonsense that a fetus is a human being with a "soul." Part of the ongoing crusade against abortion rights, Patel's persecution sets a dangerous precedent for locking up any woman suspected of ending her own pregnancy.

The 33-year-old daughter of immigrants from India, Purvi Patel had the odds stacked against her from the beginning. Already caring for two older generations of her family when she discovered that she was pregnant, Patel, who was unmarried, hid her pregnancy from her religious Hindu parents. Receiving no prenatal care, she experienced a miscarriage at home, discarded the fetal remains in the trash and began bleeding profusely. Checking into a Catholic hospital, she was seen by an anti-abortion obstetrician (a member of a "pro-life" association). Determining that Patel had been pregnant, the doctor abandoned her to help police search for the fetal remains. After surgery, she was subjected to police interrogation in the recovery room while still suffering the effects of anesthesia and blood loss. She was never read her Miranda rights.

AP

March 30: Purvi Patel after sentencing. Capitalist state enforces anti-woman bigotry.

With twisted depravity, Patel was convicted of both child neglect *and* killing a fetus. Every detail of her case is a crime against elementary human decency. Prosecutors manipulated age-old bias to defame the childless Patel as selfish. As for "child neglect," they got the jury to believe that Patel had delivered a viable fetus. The state used a ludicrous, 17th-century "lung float test" whereby fetal tissue that floats in water is supposedly proof of life—a method that sent countless women to the gallows for infanticide during the European witch trials. To supposedly prove "feticide," prosecutors accused Patel of trying to end the pregnancy herself based on text messages referring to abortion

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Purvi Patel...

(continued from page 1)

drugs, despite the fact that there was no evidence that she bought them and toxicology reports showed she had not consumed them. The prosecutor argued that someone can be guilty of "feticide" even if the fetus survives.

With 15 to 20 percent of all pregnancies ending in miscarriage, the menace to women is clear. Prior to the trial, 20,000 people signed a petition calling for Patel's "feticide" charge to be dropped. An *amici curiae* brief issued by the National Advocates for Pregnant Women, medical experts and women's rights organizations listed broader ramifications of the case, including "public health consequences, perpetuation of second-class status for women, and the likelihood that such prosecutions will target poor women and women of color, who are already disproportionately subject to law enforcement surveillance, arrest, and punishment." Such criminalization makes women afraid of talking frankly with medical providers and further deters them from seeking essential prenatal care.

The only other woman prosecuted for fetal homicide in Indiana was an Asian immigrant. In 2010, Bei Bei Shuai attempted suicide by ingesting rat poison while pregnant, and although she survived, the baby died shortly after a premature delivery. Shuai was behind bars for more than a year before being released on a plea bargain.

Cynically presented as protecting expectant mothers, "fetal homicide" laws, which are on the books in 38 states, are part of the broader arsenal for persecuting women who engage in anything deemed unacceptable maternal behavior, from drinking alcohol to not wearing a seat belt. Reflecting the racist reality in America, black women are already significantly more likely than white women to be reported by hospital staff, arrested for drug use during pregnancy and then slammed with felony child abuse charges.

AP

Oklahoma City protest after state Senate passed "personhood" bill granting legal rights to fertilized human eggs, February 2012.

Reactionary zealots and religious fundamentalists advance their "fetal rights" agenda with the aim of overturning the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion; they aim to throw women back to the days of the coat hanger. The president of Operation Rescue gloated, "We win every time we establish the precedent that the unborn child in the womb is a unique human individual." Anti-abortion forces have been successful in chipping away at abortion rights. Whole swaths of the country now have no abortion providers. To the U.S. rulers, the murder of abortion providers and countless arson attacks on clinics over the decades do not count as "terror" because they're carried out by Christians, not Muslims.

Just last week, Kansas became the first state to outlaw the dilation and evacuation procedure, the most common technique for second-trimester abortions. This is on top of Kansas' multiple restrictions on legal abortions, including banning them after 20 weeks. No wonder many women without economic means to provide for a child or who do not envision sacrificing themselves to motherhood increasingly rely on "do it yourself" methods to end unintended pregnancies. These include drugs like RU 486, which although effective and easy to use is not readily obtainable.

The message is: Stay knocked up or get locked up. We say that abortion as well as contraception should be available at no cost as part of universal, quality health care that is free at the point of service. *Roe v. Wade* was a gain for women's rights, but like all aspects of health care in this racist, class-divided society, it did not make abortion generally available for poor and working-class women. (Rich women have always been able to get one.) The right to abortion was won in a period of broader social unrest and struggle. Like any reform, it is reversible under capitalism.

Republican bible-thumpers make it easy for Democrats to posture as more rational and sympathetic to women's rights, for example by calling to preserve *Roe v. Wade*. But their support for abortion rights is nominal at best. Democrats have consistently supported the ban on federal funds for abortion included in the Hyde Amendment, a direct assault on poor women enacted in the late 1970s under "born again" Democrat Jimmy Carter. And while prosecutors and legislators tout their pro-motherhood credentials, neither capitalist party does anything to address the real concerns of pregnant women, from quality prenatal care and guaranteed paid maternity leave to protection against discrimination.

In this sick, racist capitalist society that trumpets the absurd notion of the rights of the "unborn," more than 28,000 babies born each year die before their first birthday. In the U.S., infant deaths rank the highest of any advanced industrialized society, and black infant mortality is on a par with Jamaica. That so many children are brought up in crumbling housing, with inadequate medical attention and substandard education, is the direct responsibility of the U.S. capitalist rulers, who lord over a profit system based on the exploitation of the many by the few. Recently, a black kitchen worker on Maryland's Eastern Shore and his seven children died of carbon monoxide poisoning after his electricity was cut off and he tried to keep them warm with a generator. Meanwhile, immigrant families live in daily fear of being split up through deportations.

Even as the ruling class makes life hell for working-class and poor families, it upholds the sanctity of the family. Along with organized religion and the state, the family, the main source of the oppression of women, plays a crucial role in buttressing class rule. For the capitalists, as for possessing classes throughout history, the patriarchal family serves to ensure the "rightful" inheritance of property. The family is also the means for raising the next generation of wage slaves and for instilling conservative morality and imposing social control on the exploited and oppressed. With women expected to embrace the role of "maternal hosts" for the next generation, restrictions on abortion and contraception are integrally related to the maintenance of the family.

Democrats and Republicans hypocritically bewail the "crisis of the family," insisting that parents be wholly responsible for—and relish—the upbringing of their children. Thus parents, especially so-called "bad mothers," are blamed for their children's every failure. "Family values," much like the catchphrase "religious freedom," serve as a tool of social reaction against those who fall outside the traditional nuclear family, from single mothers to gays and transgenders. The recent passage of Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act directly targets gays and will no doubt also be used to further deny contraception and abortion services. Meanwhile, many liberals trumpet gay marriage as a way that they, too, can uphold the institution of the family.

The barbaric persecution of Purvi Patel demonstrates the need to link the defense of women's rights to the struggles of the working class against the capitalist enemy. The liberation of women and all the oppressed can be achieved only through the victory of socialist revolution, with the working class creating its own state based on a planned economy. Our goal as Marxists is a world communist society of material abundance, in which the family will wither away as its social functions—housework, child-rearing, etc.—are replaced by collective institutions. For the working class to realize its task of overthrowing capitalist rule and all of its social backwardness requires building a proletarian, revolutionary internationalist party that champions all the exploited and the oppressed. ■

Communism and the Family

TROTSKY

LENIN

In laying out the communist goal for the future, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels described a world of material abundance in which socialized domestic services as well as collectivized care and responsibility for all children have liberated woman and child alike from the chains of the bourgeois family. To begin to realize this vision requires proletarian socialist revolutions all across the globe.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, etc.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

—Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (1848)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.
CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Medical Crisis

Mumia's Life in Danger—Free Him Now!

The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on April 13.

On March 30, class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was rushed from the SCI Mahanoy, Pennsylvania state prison to the Schuylkill Medical Center Intensive Care Unit, verging on a diabetic coma. With consummate cruelty, prison authorities initially not only prevented his wife, Wadiya, and other family members from seeing Mumia but also refused to divulge information about his condition. Pam Africa, Mumia's designated emergency contact, was denied visitation as well. When prison officials relented after numerous protests, Wadiya, Mumia's son Jamal Hart and his older brother Keith were granted just 30 minutes with Mumia. They found him with an insulin drip in one arm and handcuffs on the other, barely able to sit up, shaking and in pain, his breathing labored. Wadiya described being "shocked at his condition." On April 1, a frail Mumia was sent back to the same Mahanoy prison where the contempt and medical neglect of his jailers had brought him to the threshold of death.

It is no secret that leading government officials, not just in Pennsylvania but across the country, want Mumia dead. This latest emergency highlights that Mumia's life is in danger every day he remains in the clutches of the state authorities that for 30 years sought his legal lynching. With the overturning of his frame-up death sentence in 2011, they are determined that Mumia's prison cot be his deathbed.

Three months ago, Mumia reported a full-body outbreak of eczema with bloody sores and blisters. Mumia's skin erupted in reaction to treatment by prison doctors. Since then, Mumia has lost over 50 pounds. Results of three blood tests performed in February were reportedly withheld from him. Even the most incompetent medical personnel would have recognized something was awry—but Mumia was left to waste away while his blood sugar hit the roof. Not passing up any opportunity, prison authorities disciplined Mumia for missing roll call in early January because he had fallen into a trance-like sleep induced by his condition.

The shroud that prison authorities placed over Mumia's condition recalls the mysterious death of his comrade Phil Africa at the State Correctional Institution in Dallas, Pennsylvania, on January 10. Phil was held in total isolation in the hospital for five days, during which time his wife of 44 years, Janine, was denied the right to speak to him until two days before he died. To this day, prison officials have never revealed the cause of Phil's death.

We have long championed freedom for Mumia, an innocent man. Now the elementary demand for adequate medical treatment requires his immediate release. *Free Mumia now!*

Johanna Fernandez
Mumia Abu-Jamal, April 6.

Mumia has been in the crosshairs of the capitalist state since his days as a teenage Black Panther Party spokesman in the 1960s. That enmity toward him grew in the 1970s when, as a journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," Mumia exposed the racist Philly police vendetta against MOVE, the largely black back-to-nature group he came to support. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Daniel Faulkner. Police and prosecutors manufactured evidence to convict him, including by terrorizing witnesses and concocting a fake confession two months after his arrest. Following a 1982 trial in which Mumia was denied the right to represent himself and was repeatedly ejected from the courtroom, he was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views, primarily his Black Panther membership. Federal and state courts have time and again refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, especially the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner.

Mumia's unwavering dedication to the cause of the oppressed can be seen in his delivering, despite his debilitated condition, a radio commentary on April 10 about the cold-blooded racist cop killing of 50-year-old black man Walter Scott by a white cop in South Carolina six days earlier. In their vendetta against Mumia, the forces of racist "law and order," led by the Fraternal Order of Police, have fought to silence Mumia and vilify just about anyone—from union and student activists to liberal celebrities and an occasional politician—who in any way expresses support for Mumia's rights. The same day Mumia was rushed to the hospital, hearings opened in a Pennsylvania court on his lawsuit challenging the "Revictimization Relief Act" enacted last October with the express aim of shutting down Mumia's prison commentaries and suppressing his books.

Following an outcry in the bourgeois press, Marilyn Zuniga, a third-grade teacher in Orange, New Jersey, was suspended on April 10 without pay for the honorable act of encouraging students to send "get well" messages to Mumia. The PDC has sent a protest letter demanding Zuniga's immediate reinstatement with no loss in pay.

Medical neglect of those incarcerated in America's dungeons is epidemic. While the absence of care for those suffering from severe psychiatric problems has drawn some attention, most recently thanks to the torture chambers of New York City's Rikers Island detention center, the denial of necessary medical attention to those, largely black and Latino, behind bars has been overwhelmingly ignored.

The medical neglect of those in prison hell has been exacerbated by the privatization of prison health care to penny-pinching concerns such as Corizon Health Inc., which alone covers nearly 350,000 inmates in 27 states. Corizon is the subject of numerous lawsuits, including one filed by the family of Javon Frazier, who was an inmate in a county jail in Florida. After four months of complaints of left shoulder pain, which were answered only with Tylenol, Frazier was ultimately hospitalized and diagnosed with bone cancer and his arm amputated. Frazier died just months after his release, at the age of 21.

The grotesque treatment of prisoners is exacerbated many times over for those, like Mumia, locked away for fighting against this racist capitalist order. The PDC has contributed to Mumia's medical care, and urges union militants, fighters for black freedom and student activists to demand freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Readers who want to help defray Mumia's expenses can make contributions at www.indiegogo.com/projects/mumia-abu-jamal-needs-medical-care-now. To correspond with Mumia, write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335, SCI Mahanoy, 301 Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932. ■

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The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929
by Jacob Zumoff

New York City
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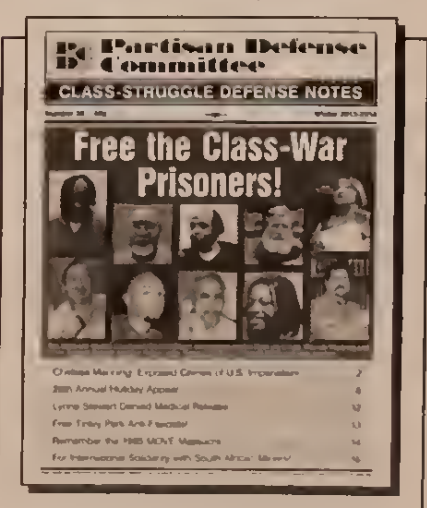

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For the Materialist Conception of History

Marxism and the Fight Against Native Oppression in Canada

We reprint below a presentation by comrade Nevin Morrison at a Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste Central Committee plenum and national educational gathering in July 2014. It was first published in edited form in *Spartacist Canada* No. 184 (Spring 2015).

In their introduction to the presentation, our Canadian comrades observed:

> "The federal government recently fêted the bicentennial of the birth of John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister. Macdonald once boasted of keeping the Native population on the Prairies on the 'verge of actual starvation': as his government deliberately withheld food from the aboriginal peoples, thousands died. In 1885, he suppressed the Northwest Rebellion and hanged its Métis [people of mixed Native-European descent] leader Louis Riel. It is entirely fitting that today's rulers of capitalist Canada, who continue to preside over the brutal oppression of Native people, would honour such a man."

* * *

SPARTACIST CANADA

We have frequently exposed in the pages of *Spartacist Canada* the misery and brutality that are daily life for Native peoples. Our article "Canada: Racist Hell for Native Peoples" (*SC* No. 176, Spring 2013) [reprinted in *WV* No. 1021, 5 April 2013], for example, dealt with the Idle No More protests that began about two years ago with a hunger strike by chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat band in northern Ontario. These countrywide protests publicized the squalid poverty on reserves that lack even basic housing, clean water and sanitation. In the cities, Natives are ghettoized, disproportionately unemployed, subject to police violence and almost as likely to be imprisoned as to finish high school.

It's not complicated to figure out how to improve conditions. There is a burning need for jobs, housing, education and infrastructure. An end to racist policies and redress for past mistreatment shouldn't be controversial either (though they often are). But the capitalist class for whose benefit this society is organized cannot and will never provide these necessities.

To understand why, to address the roots of Native oppression and develop a program to defeat it, requires a Marxist worldview: historical materialism. At its core is the proposition that production of the means to support human life—food, clothing and shelter—and the exchange of things produced are the basis of all social systems. It is the struggle between those who own the means of production and those who don't—the class struggle—that is the motor force of history.

For example, feudalism, based on the ownership of land and the exploitation of serfs, was replaced by capitalism, based on the ownership of manufactures and the exploitation of wage labour. A tiny minority, the bourgeoisie, owns the factories, mines and other industries, while the working class—the proletariat—owns essentially nothing and has to sell its ability to work to the capitalists in order to survive.

It is the historic task of today's exploited class to sweep away the capitalist system and forge an egalitarian socialist society where production is based on human needs, and not on profit. The liberation of the working class is thus also necessarily the liberation of all of the oppressed. Only such a truly human society can guarantee Native rights and finally redress centuries of abuse and degradation at the hands of a truly venal ruling class.

Bibliotheque nationale du Quebec

Execution of Métis leader Louis Riel in 1885. Canadian prime minister John A. Macdonald forced starving families to witness hangings to "convince the Red Man that the White Man rules."

Our political tendency has always emphasized the need to combat the *special* oppression of Natives, blacks, women and others. Such oppression is intimately connected with the "normal" capitalist exploitation of the workers and must be fought by means of the class struggle. The revolutionary party must, in the words of Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin, act as a "tribune of the people," educating and mobilizing workers against the racism and other backwardness instilled by their capitalist rulers which can only divide and weaken them.

AP

Toronto, January 2013: Protesters from Idle No More campaign against racist oppression of Native peoples.

Most of our opponents on the left these days reject historical materialism, just as they reject the perspective of working-class revolution and instead push variants of Native cultural nationalism and "ecosocialism." An example of this trend is found in a short book by David Bedford and Danielle Irving entitled *The Tragedy of Progress: Marxism, Modernity and the Aboriginal Question* (2001), which criticizes various leftist organizations (including ours) for not having "embraced more enthusiastically the Aboriginal struggle." The source of this supposed lack of enthusiasm is, they claim, a reading of Marxism as a "variant of modernity" that flows from "the enlightenment idea of unceasing progress through the application of an instrumental rationality." They attack "those on the left who equate worker emancipation and technological progress," and assert that such a perspective cannot address the "desire by many Aboriginal leaders to preserve a traditional material culture."

Bedford and Irving try to strip Marxism of its materialist underpinnings and working-class centrality and twist it into a utopian worldview that can encompass Native "traditionalism." This requires idealizing Native customs and cultures as somehow standing outside and apart from productive developments and immune to change. Having done this, they conclude that workers revolution cannot address the issues facing Native people.

"Human societies which exist without individual property ownership and without industrialization experience no alienation," wrote Bedford in a 1994 article in the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, asking rhetorically: "What do we say to those people who have yet to experience the alienation for which socialism is the answer...?" By this logic, the Marxist program for the emancipation of the proletariat is inapplicable to indigenous peoples *today* because *500 years ago* their cultures and pre-colonial development did not include alienated labour!

Naturally we have something to say about this caricature of Marxism. More broadly, Bedford's polemic provides an opportunity to explore just what has changed in the last 500 years or so—the historical and anthropological roots of Native oppression and our Marxist program to address it. Of course the diversity of the pre-colonial cultures of North America cannot be captured in one presentation and I won't try to do so, but I will discuss some specific examples in what is now the Canadian state. I will not talk at much length about some current issues impacting Natives—resource development and land claims, for example—which are dealt with in the pages of *SC*.

Bedford and Irving write of the "silence of the left" on Native oppression, asserting: "For parties on the left, the fate of Aboriginal peoples and the fate of a traditional culture confronted by a capitalist economy is of little interest." Even a cursory look at our press gives the lie to this ridiculous assertion. Our very first issue, published in October 1975, includes an article headlined "Defend the B.C. Native Militants!" What Bedford really objects to is our Marxist worldview. This is captured succinctly in a passage he quotes from our press that sharply denounces those whose concern for "traditional culture" is a mask for liberal anti-communism:

> "The options for Native people are often presented as a choice between 'traditional culture' and racist capitalist society. But this is a false choice, not least because the vibrant pre-European culture is irreparably lost. The real choice is between the perpetuation of the crimes of the past—centuries of racist genocide and wholesale destruction of the Natives' way of life—or the creation of a future in a society not based on brutal exploitation and all-sided racism.
>
> "...[W]e reject the idealization of 'traditional culture' as liberal racism and a patronizing glorification of backwardness."
>
> —"Torture of Native Women in Canada," *Women and Revolution* No. 42, Spring/Summer 1993

Morgan, Marx and Engels

Native oppression is a product of capitalist society that can only be finally defeated with its overthrow. It is rooted in history: in the rise of the Canadian state from its colonial origins and the consequent undermining and destruction of the indigenous societies and economies. Our *Programmatic Theses*, published in 1998, concisely summarized this process:

> "Canadian capitalism was founded on the destruction of the pre-existing aboriginal societies, beginning under French and, later, English colonialism. The possibility of independent development of Indian nations was foreclosed by the expropriation of these peoples through fraud and military conquest, combined with the devastating impact of disease following European contact."

One cannot understand the development of indigenous peoples by an idealized study of their culture and values. It is essential to understand what they did to survive and adapt their environments to their needs—the material basis for culture—as well as the material forces that were at play in the displacement of these societies.

Historical materialism holds that a superstructure of ideas, politics and culture and so on fundamentally derives from the ways in which humans work on nature to produce the means of subsistence. This method was applied independently by the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan to sketch the history and anthropology of the Iroquois people. Morgan's 1877 book *Ancient Society* was the basis for Karl Marx's ethnological notebooks, and these in turn were elaborated by Friedrich Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). Engels wrote in his introduction that Morgan "rediscovered in America, in his own way, the materialist conception of history that had been discovered by Marx forty years ago."

Morgan was influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to view human societies in the process of their development. He described the different technologies, i.e., tools and practices, associated with different levels of development. Morgan used the anthropological categories of savagery, barbarism and civilization to describe stages of social development. Given the pejorative use today of the terms "savagery" and "barbarism," I should note that his writings contain no hint of any ethnocentric prejudice. To the contrary, he viewed social progress always from the point of view of the fundamental unity of our species.

In examining the different forms of social development, Morgan (like Marx, Engels and ourselves) placed value on the technologies associated with progressively higher forms of production. He wrote that humans "worked their way up from savagery to civilization through the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge." The acquisition of agriculture, metal tools, domesticated animals, language and writing allowed human societies to live better with less labour, to settle in centres with larger populations, to grow stronger with a stable supply of protein. These advances in our mastery of nature made social and cultural developments possible.

Morgan's survey of ancient societies began with the successive developments in technology that increased the means of subsistence. He then traced the impact of these developments on forms of social organization, systems of family and the establishment of political organizations based on territory and private property.

Marx and Engels used the phrase "primitive communism" to describe aboriginal societies which had relative equality between men and women and did not have private property, classes or a coercive state. The ability to produce more than the bare necessities, mainly through agriculture, would lead to a social division of labour and hierarchy as the surplus production came to be divided. Those who appropriated a greater share would eventually require the means to defend this property against the less privileged and to pass it down to their children. Private property, classes, the state and the monogamous family therefore emerged. This is also the origin of women's oppression, what Engels called "the world historic defeat of the female sex."

Early Aboriginal Societies

Before European settlement, the population of what is now Canada numbered perhaps two million, concentrated in regions where sedentary life was possible: Iroquois farmers in southern Ontario and fishermen on the Northwest coast. The continent then was fully populated. As historian Olive Dickason writes in *Canada's First Nations* (2009): "The lands that appeared 'vacant' to the new arrivals were either hunting areas or else had been recently depopulated because of introduced epidemics."

The tribal mode of life was based on what Marx called production for use. This appropriation of nature for the maintenance and reproduction of the community did not provide for the personal accumulation of capital through the private ownership and hired labour that drove the capitalist economies. The concept of private property in land was a foreign one. Where an economic surplus was produced, as in the rich fishing economies of the Northwest, goods were frequently redistributed in potlatch ceremonies to increase the prestige of a tribe and its leaders and perhaps to attract free labour.

Starting roughly 10,000 years ago in Central and South America, agriculture had slowly spread into the less hospitable climate of North America over several millennia. Morgan notes that grain cultivation allowed a more settled village existence, as in the Iroquois region, tending to supplant fish and game and making possible for the first time an abundance of food. Agriculture made permanent settlement both possible and necessary in such regions.

Morgan identified two plans of government: the ancient social organization based on kinship links; and the modern, political organization based on territory and property. "The plan of government of the American aborigines," he wrote, "commenced with the gens [a group of families] and ended with the confederacy, the latter being the highest point to which their governmental institutions attained." A confederacy was an alliance of tribes whose members spoke dialects of the same language. The social organization was essentially democratic. The tribes of the Iroquois confederacy were linked through common descent through the female line. In the Iroquois matriarchate, property remained within the clan, so mother-daughter ties were more important than spousal ties. Morgan noted that there was no political society, citizenship or state in this kinship-based society.

G. Lester

Morgan Papers, University of Rochester

Left: Communist leader Friedrich Engels. Right: Lewis Henry Morgan, pioneer American anthropologist.

Like Morgan, who was adopted as an honorary member of the Seneca tribe after helping them retain land that had been taken by fraud, Marx admired the egalitarianism of many primitive societies based on pre-class communal property forms. At the same time, he would denounce as foolish utopianism all schemes of somehow returning to a romanticized traditional culture based on scarcity. He emphasized that the development of means of production was the engine of history, which allowed us to overcome scarcity but was also the basis for class divisions and the alienation of labour from its products. Given the uneven development of capitalism, it was inevitable that many pre-capitalist societies would be the victims of the ruthless expansion of the profit system.

Disease, Death and Devastation

The settlement of North America by Europeans is sometimes depicted as a simple slaughter and military conquest. This did occur in some areas but it is also an overgeneralization. One example is the Beothuk who encountered Europeans in Newfoundland. Early on, Basque fishermen who came to the island could leave gear and boats undisturbed in Beothuk areas over the winters. But no common interests developed between them and the indigenous population. As the fishermen began to interfere with the Beothuk seasonal hunting rounds by using their shore sites, the latter in turn began raiding European gear. When permanent European settlement began, conflicts escalated into bloody slaughter: the French and English attacked the Beothuk, driving them away from the coast and into the barren interior, where they faced isolation and starvation and were hunted down. After 300 years none were left.

By far the biggest killers of the aboriginal population were the diseases carried by European settlers that quickly spread to the furthest reaches of the continent. Natives did not share the acquired immunity of the Europeans and the vast majority of the population was decimated in epidemics that recurred for centuries.

Corbis

French forces under Samuel de Champlain ally with Algonquins to defeat Iroquois in 1609.

Alongside bloody massacres and the plague of epidemic disease, when interests coincided there could be cohabitation. Fur traders, especially from France, lived interdependently with Native trappers, intermarrying and fighting alongside them against rival traders. As the fur trade dwindled over time, relationships changed. Fishermen contesting the best spots and farmers lusting after aboriginal land were more likely to be hostile. These eventually came to carry more economic weight and to vastly outnumber the Native population.

Colonial Rivalries

The French, English and Dutch established rival trading posts, seeking the allegiance of Native trappers in competition for furs. The result was a rapid depletion of fur-bearing animals and bloody competition among Native tribes for furs and trade routes. Peoples who left behind hunter-gatherer or agricultural modes that were incompatible with the fur trading economies would become dependent on Europeans, relying on the trading posts to fill many of their needs. Proximity to European trading posts and missionaries exacerbated the effects of epidemic diseases such as smallpox and the use of alcohol and indebtedness to manipulate Natives.

The Huron and Iroquois are a case study in the divisions created by the fur trade. As the French established themselves in Quebec in 1608, they secured an alliance with the Huron, fighting beside them against their Iroquois rivals. The French plugged into the Huron trade network and flotillas of canoes carrying thousands of furs came down the Ottawa River to Quebec annually for decades.

The Iroquois in turn opened up trade with the Dutch and English but soon exhausted their own beaver supplies. By the 1640s, with guns from the Dutch, the Iroquois Five Nations attacked Huron control of the rivers, routing them and annihilating their villages. The Huron scattered, starved, or were captured and adopted into Iroquois tribes. By 1700 the Five Nations expanded to become the dominant force in the Northeast, controlling trade routes from the English colonies into the interior.

By the mid 17th century, New France was being colonized as an agricultural colony organized on feudal principles. In England, meanwhile, the rising bourgeoisie began to multiply its fleet of ships and pursue an aggressive colonial policy. As the two powers went to war in Europe, they and their Native allies also fought in North America, combining trade competition with military objectives. As Marxist historian Stanley Ryerson observed, "The forces that impelled New England forward were those that brought on and carried through the English bourgeois revolution. The roadblocks in the way of New France were such as the Cromwellian revolution cleared away" (*The Founding of Canada: Beginnings to 1815* [1960]).

With the British victory in the Seven Years War [known in the U.S. as the French and Indian War], the 1763 Treaty of Paris transferred to the British Crown one of the largest territories covered by any treaty before or since. Native peoples naturally disputed the transfer of land they had never ceded, taking the position that it was not they but the French who had been defeated, so their lands were not at stake. On top of this, the vacuum left by the French spurred settlers to take land through "sharp dealing" or outright theft.

At the same time, decreased leverage for Natives to bargain between the feuding powers was reflected in the rising prices demanded by British traders. Seething discontent erupted in a Native uprising which took several British forts in the Old Northwest in 1763, killing hundreds of settlers. British commander-in-chief Jeffrey Amherst's infamous reaction was to propose the distribution of smallpox-laden blankets. The rising was unsuccessful, failing to receive help from France as hoped, and tribes were played off against each other in negotiations which allowed

continued on page 6

Canada...

(continued from page 5)

the British to resume control of their forts in exchange for an empty promise that Native hunting grounds would remain undisturbed.

The American Revolution

The American war of independence began in 1775, a result of the growth of a colonial bourgeoisie which asserted itself in an historically progressive struggle against the imperial centre. The Americans gained the assistance of France and Spain to defeat their British rivals. The 1783 Peace of Paris ceded the Ohio Valley to the newly fledged United States, and settlers and governments continued to press for and confiscate aboriginal lands. Attempted Native uprisings defeated Americans in two battles, but were ultimately put down as Britain refused assistance. Yet more aboriginal land was ceded.

Britain's attempts to reverse the verdict of the American Revolution culminated in the War of 1812. The so-called United Empire Loyalists—wealthy counterrevolutionaries who took Britain's side—flowed north to what is now Canada. These reactionaries were no friends of Native peoples, but for several reasons the British side posed fewer direct threats to tribes struggling to resist colonial expansion. Settlements were smaller, and agriculture and industry slower to develop in Canada than to the south. Moreover, the continued preoccupation with trade actually required a degree of Native participation. Thus there was less *immediate* pressure to expropriate land.

Britain's military efforts rested heavily on aboriginal support. In particular they cultivated Tecumseh, a Shawnee-Creek leader who had sought to mobilize an inter-tribal movement to insist that no single tribe could cede land without the consent of others. Thousands of Natives of several tribes fought beside just 800 British soldiers in 1813 at Moraviantown, where Tecumseh died in battle while his British counterpart General Proctor turned tail and ran. Their support was rewarded with betrayal once again as the British dropped the demand for a neutral territory for Natives, leaving them no further ahead for their military efforts.

Dispossession of Land: Fraud and Conquest

The core of the conflict between tribal societies and the expansion of capitalism in the New World lay in the clash of productive systems of vastly different levels of development. The continued independent evolution of the Indian tribes, whose technology could not possibly compete with that of the colonizers, was a possibility bloodily cancelled by history. The development of capitalism first in England and later the colonies required what Marx called the "primitive accumulation of capital," a brutal process which drove people off the land they had lived on and worked since time immemorial.

City of Vancouver Archives

1889: Native longshoremen on Moodyville docks near Vancouver, British Columbia. Natives were integral to early B.C. working class.

Britain used the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to codify its mercantile interests in the territory acquired with the defeat of the French. This document recognized some kind of aboriginal title—not out of any supposed generosity toward the aboriginal peoples, but as a way of securing peace so the fur trade would remain profitable. But this all changed with the triumph of industrial capitalism over the mercantile system in the decades following the American Revolution.

As trade turned to more intensive settlement, communal aboriginal hunting and gathering grounds became an obstacle to exploitation of the continent's natural resources through agriculture, lumbering and mining. The colonial state moved to "extinguish" the Native title and squeeze them into paltry reserves. Over several decades, treaties took land covering most of Canada's habitable area in return for trivial annuities and hunting and fishing rights that have since been eroded. As Stanley Ryerson wrote, "The fact of the matter is that the Indians were dispossessed of their lands by a colossal operation of fraud, misrepresentation and legalized theft."

The much later settlement of British Columbia provides an example of capitalist so-called primitive accumulation at its rawest. In B.C. there had been as dense a pre-industrial, non-agrarian population as anywhere: perhaps 200,000 to 300,000 inhabitants, with sophisticated, wealthy, hierarchical societies, a rich economy focused on the salmon harvest and thriving trade networks. An underclass of slaves comprised up to a third of the population. Contact with Europeans brought disease which resulted in a radical depopulation of 90 to 95 percent, a blow from which the Natives did not recover. Indeed, B.C.'s aboriginal population continued to drop until it reached a low of about 20,000 in 1929.

The early colonial economy in B.C. had revolved around the maritime fur trade which did not bring extensive settlement, and Natives remained a majority through the 1880s. Europeans really began to establish themselves in the mid 19th century as the British formed a proprietary Hudson's Bay Company colony and gold was discovered on the Fraser and Thompson rivers.

With the Douglas Treaties of the 1850s, the aboriginal people on the southern part of Vancouver Island were compelled to give up their land "entirely and forever" in exchange for some blankets and a pledge that they could continue to use certain areas. Things only got worse when Joseph Trutch became land commissioner in the 1860s. Trutch was a vile racist who declared that "The Indians really have no right to the lands they claim, nor are they of any actual value or utility to them." Seeing B.C.'s future in large land grants to settlers to develop agriculture, he reduced Native reserves to ten acres or less per family—in contrast to 160 acres for settlers—and made it impossible for Natives to acquire land by pre-emption as settlers did (i.e., by fencing and putting labour into it).

In his book *Landing Native Fisheries* (2008), historian Douglas Harris documents how the government imposed tiny, often barren reserves on the basis that Natives were fishing peoples who didn't need extensive land, while simultaneously devastating the Native fisheries by opening up the industry to all comers. He writes: "The reserve and the food fishery served the same purpose. Their intent and effect were to set aside fragments of traditional territories and fisheries for Native peoples, opening the remainder to immigrants." Dispossession of land together with enforced isolation from the productive forces of capitalist society formed a general pattern of racist abuse, denying Natives both the old world of the tribe, which was destroyed, and the new world of capitalist society, whose doors were closed to them.

We support any attempt by aboriginal peoples to claw back some of the land which has been stolen from them, and to obtain whatever financial compensation they can from the ruling class. But the courts, like the glacial treaty process, will never provide a solution to the Native oppression under capitalism. While sometimes running ahead of governments in recognizing specific claims, the courts are bound to uphold capitalist private property and Canada's British colonial constitutional heritage. The deck is necessarily stacked against Natives.

A small historical example: in 1921 the British Privy Council ruled that aboriginal title pre-existed and continued throughout the British Empire unless explicitly extinguished. The Canadian response? The Indian Act was amended, making it illegal for Natives to raise money or retain a lawyer to advance land claims. This continued until 1951, two years after the abolition of Canadian appeals to the Privy Council. Elementary justice demands the end of the entire private property system under a workers government, which alone can guarantee a just and egalitarian future for the Native peoples.

Marginalization and Racist Oppression

The colonial administrations—and, following Confederation in 1867, the Canadian government—came to regard the aboriginal population as a disappearing people whose remnants were to be forcibly assimilated, refashioned as farmers and Christians. This racist "civilization" program would be run by missionaries and funded by sale of Native land. Native cultural practices were outlawed and languages and culture suppressed, most notoriously through the infamous residential school system run by churches and religious orders, which stole children from their families. The purpose of this system was captured in 1892 by Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in the U.S.: "Kill the Indian in him and save the man."

Woodside/Library and Archives Canada

Quebec, circa 1890. Church-run residential school system stole Native children from families across Canada.

At the same time, the remnants of the traditional aboriginal material cultures were destroyed. Today, even in the shrinking areas of production where Natives have a role based on their traditional means of subsistence—the salmon fishery and seal hunt, for example—their products are necessarily largely directed to the capitalist market.

Contrary to Professor Bedford—who judges himself competent to state that indigenous North Americans "are not proletarians, nor do they want to become proletarians" (*Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1994)—Native people have historically often sought integration into the workforce. In B.C., Native workers were an important component in longshore, lumbering, commercial fishing and the canning industry during the late 19th and early 20th century. Bryan Palmer's new book on the Trotskyist-led 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike, *Revolutionary Teamsters*, describes how Native workers joined one of the key strikes that built the American labour movement. A member of the Sioux Nation conducted target practice for the union defense guard, and some Indian militants joined the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. [See

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our review in *WV* Nos. 1052 and 1053, 19 September and 3 October 2014.]

Over the years, insofar as Native people have been able to find work, this has mostly been in the worst-paid, most insecure jobs. Today, urban Natives are largely either excluded from production altogether or relegated to the "reserve army of labour," sacrificed to the structural unemployment that the capitalists need to attack wages and working conditions. They are also jailed in massive disproportion to their numbers. On the reserves, aboriginal people are treated as second-class citizens, with separate and unequal systems of education and health care. The integrated working class must stand at the head of all the oppressed: not only defending Native people against oppression and repression, but fighting for their integration into the workforce. We call for the unions to control hiring, with aggressive recruitment and training for those—Natives, women, immigrants—who have historically been discriminated against by the capitalist class.

The Dead End of Native "Nationalism"

Bedford and Irving devote a section of their book to the cultural nationalism of Native activists Ward Churchill and Russell Means, who openly denounce Marxism because it is inseparable from "the rest of the European intellectual tradition" in basing itself on industry and production (Ward Churchill [ed.], *Marxism and Native Americans* [1999]).

Indigenous cultural nationalists like Churchill and Means came out of the radicalization of the 1960s and early '70s. This saw the rise of a "new Indian" movement based on the view that the indigenous peoples of North America were nationalities that should pursue national independence. In Canada, parallel movements emerged in opposition to the Liberal government's 1969 White Paper, which proposed to end any special status for Natives, convert reserves to private property which could be sold and gradually terminate existing treaties. This was rightly labelled cultural genocide by many Natives.

The Spartacus Youth League, our youth organization in the U.S. in the 1970s, wrote that:

> "American Indian 'nationalism'...represents an expression of the oppression and despair which Indians have experienced in urban centers [where they] have organized against particular manifestations of their special oppression beyond tribal lines into pan-Indian organizations. But Indian 'nationalism' has never succeeded in formulating a genuinely nationalist program and perspective for struggle, ultimately because the American Indian tribes were dismembered and destroyed by rising American capitalism before they could enter the historic process of national consolidation."
>
> —"Marxism and the American Indian Question," *Young Spartacus* No. 31, April 1975

Today, despair over mass unemployment, racism and social isolation leads many Natives to seek solace in spiritualism and traditional communal values said to be shared by diverse aboriginal cultures, dreaming of a refuge where the virtues of idealized traditional life can be pursued. The stark fact is that none of this can do anything to end their oppression.

Lacking any perspective of a proletarian overturn of the capitalist order, various reformist left organizations have embraced or given cover to such cultural nationalism. For example, a 1970 pamphlet, "Red Power in Canada," issued by the League for Socialist Action acknowledged that Natives lacked a common territory, language and economic life to serve as the basis for a nation. Yet it concluded: "Regardless of this, or that formal criterion, the key question is how the Indians see themselves—their collective consciousness. In this sense, the Indians are evolving, from a race to a nationality...to a nation" (republished by socialisthistory.ca, 2005).

The flag of "self-determination" can be waved around by all manner of liberals and reformists because they obscure its concrete content: the right to national independence. The cohering of nations is fundamentally a material not an idealist process, based not on nationalist ideology or feelings but on political and economic development. This was forcibly halted for Native peoples when their pre-capitalist economic forms were conquered by colonial capitalism.

I would note by way of contrast that the Québécois, descendants of the French settlers, are a fully fledged nation forcibly contained in the Canadian state with their own shared language and culture and a clear basis for an independent political economy. In contrast to his talk of self-determination for Natives, Bedford has nothing to say about this; indeed when he was briefly around our organization in Montreal in the late 1980s, he wanted nothing to do with our advocacy of Quebec's right to self-determination.

Canadian Press

Calgary, May 2011: Yinka Dene Alliance protesting the Northern Gateway pipeline project threatening to cut across land claimed by Natives.

Movements for Native "self-determination" encompass everything from armed protests to the official process of negotiating treaties and self-government agreements. The former, while often militant and courageous, can ultimately result only in deadly defeat at the hands of a capitalist state possessing far greater force of arms. The latter has produced few results, even as aboriginal peoples become indebted to the government for the costs of treaty negotiations. And any treaty arrangement between the rich, racist rulers and the impoverished aboriginal peoples can only be based on a wildly unequal balance of forces.

Indeed, we have warned against a conception of "self-government" that amounts to offloading the reserves or other settlements onto Native chiefs and bureaucrats so they can assume responsibility for the results of centuries of racist oppression and keep their people in line with their own cops and courts. Under capitalism, the result of such "self-government" will be the same old poverty and social degradation, under a camouflage of Native traditions. Nevertheless, we defend whatever measure of political autonomy Native peoples with a land base are able to attain, including the right to govern their land and control its resources.

Native Rights and "Ecosocialism"

I want to say a few words about environmentalism. Bedford has recently rebranded his arguments to take advantage of the popularity of "ecosocialism," coauthoring with Thomas Cheney an article titled "Labor, Nature, and Spirituality: Human Ecology and a Left-First Nations Politics" (*Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 2013). They argue that aboriginal peoples do not seek to control nature; rather, their animism/spiritualism "engenders an attitude of respect and humility toward the ecology, rather than a will to dominate it." If this were the case, Native people would be unlike every other group of humans that has ever existed.

It is interesting that Bedford and Cheney choose to develop their argument with reference to Northwest coastal peoples whose hierarchical societies traditionally captured slaves and traded them up and down the coast. One can imagine what kind of opinion those slaves might have had concerning their captors' "will to dominate"!

Embracing a traditional lifestyle and culture is not a luxury available to most Natives, who face stark poverty on the reserves and a wall of racism and police brutality in the cities. In terms of the material culture existing before European settlement, which required large areas of land for hunting to support small populations, the continent was, as I noted, already pretty full. With vastly larger numbers today, a hunter-gatherer economy is far beyond fantasy. Intensive production and a social division of labour are essential not only to produce books, computers, motorized transportation and vaccines, but to adequately feed and house the population.

Environmentalists often see a superficial affinity between their reactionary "back to nature" utopias and the interests of Native peoples. Today, opposition to various pipeline proposals sees Natives and environmentalists conjuncturally on the same side, as the former seek to protect land claims while the latter oppose any oil development. But environmentalism often runs directly against Native interests. The success of "conservation" campaigns against logging, trapping and the seal hunt has reinforced the poverty of many, including Inuit and other aboriginal peoples who depended on these industries for their livelihood. Aboriginal rights to control their resources include the right to seek their development, a right which we defend.

As Marxists, we recognize that rational planning of the use of natural resources and the development of production requires the overturn of the irrational capitalist profit system. Production for use rather than the profit of a wealthy minority opens the possibility for society to plan the use of the earth's resources for the benefit of all.

The best historical model for this is the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Under Marxist leadership, the insurgent working class and the new workers state championed the cause of all those oppressed in the former tsarist empire. The experience of the Soviet Union before its Stalinist degeneration gives a taste of what is possible for indigenous tribal peoples under working-class rule. Despite great material poverty, the workers state promoted broad autonomy, language and cultural rights, literacy programs and integration into the economy as well as leading positions in the party and state administrations.

Only the destruction of capitalism can set the conditions for voluntary integration on the basis of full equality for those Native people who desire it, and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who prefer a different way of life. And where Native rights to land and resources would be affected by socially useful industrial developments, only a workers government will guarantee that any development proceeds on the basis of full consent and generous compensation.

Yes, Marxism Means Social Progress!

Bedford and Cheney argue that the left must "shed long-held dogmas about religion and alienated consciousness, allowing it to take seriously indigenous spirituality." To the contrary, Marxists defend the scientific progress associated with the Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries, together with its conception of human freedom against all forms of mysticism, superstition, quackery and social reaction. The "liberty, equality and fraternity" of capitalism's progressive epoch has long ceased to be the rallying cry for a bourgeois class firmly ensconced in power. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union two decades ago and the consequent retrogression of working-class consciousness worldwide provide fertile soil for all kinds of backward ideas. Bedford et al.'s idealist and reactionary promise of a return to a premodern economy and culture is one of them.

In idealizing societies of the past, Bedford has to distort them beyond any historical or anthropological understanding. Indeed, he takes aim at the Enlightenment itself, attributing the left's supposed "silence" on the Native question to an analysis "grounded on an acceptance of the key concept associated with modernity—the fact and value of progress":

> "Modern cultures, the inheritors of the Enlightenment, see history as a development or progress from less advanced to more advanced forms. History is marked by continual improvements in science and technology.... This is especially visible as our capacity to produce and consume is

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Catalonia...

(continued from page 12)

autonomy from the central government and refused to renegotiate the terms under which tax income is distributed between Madrid and Barcelona (Catalonia's capital) and what share of the national expense is devoted to Catalonia. The PP merchants of homelessness and hunger have hypocritically promoted the chauvinist stereotype of Catalans as greedy and lacking in "solidarity" with the poorer parts of Spain.

The vile chauvinism emanating from Madrid has provoked a strong reaction in Catalonia. A catalyst for this anger was the decision in 2010 by Spain's Constitutional Court to overturn numerous articles of Catalonia's 2006 autonomy statute, including the section that recognized Catalonia as a nation. This was the outcome of the PP's legal challenge against no less than 128 out of 223 articles in the statute. The day after the Constitutional Court decision was announced, over one million people in Catalonia protested, carrying banners reading: "We Are a Nation!"

The Catalan bourgeoisie, represented by the Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union) coalition and its more left-sounding tails in the Esquerra Republicana (Republican Left), who together currently dominate Catalonia's Generalitat government, mirrors the Castilian bourgeoisie's hypocrisy. They have conveniently blamed the economic crisis in Catalonia on the rest of Spain, pointing to unfavorable terms of taxation and lack of infrastructure investment by the central government, which are hurting their profits. Simultaneously, the Generalitat has itself shoved austerity down the throats of workers and the poor.

Following the demise of the Franco regime, the Catalan bourgeoisie saw its task as trying to gradually acquire more autonomy from the central government. The Basque and Catalan bourgeois nationalists had extracted concessions by supporting at different points both PSOE and PP governments when those parties did not win enough votes to form a national government on their own. However, after the economic crisis hit, the PSOE government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero initiated the austerity drive. It had also earlier reneged on some of its promises to Catalonia. When the PP was elected in 2011, it was able to form a government without the support of any of the regional bourgeois-nationalist parties, enabling it to act with unrestrained hostility against any decentralizing tendencies and thereby pushing more of the Catalan bourgeoisie toward independence.

Also a key factor in the turn toward independence by a section of the Catalan bourgeoisie is Catalonia's weakening link to the Spanish market—for years it has sold more of its manufactured goods on the international market than domestically, with a large proportion of these exports going to other EU countries. Catalonia's relative weight in Spain's economy also declined as the result of a conscious policy by the Castilian bourgeoisie to build up the areas surrounding Madrid as an industrial center in the 1960s and 1970s. This diminished the relative economic dominance of Catalonia and the Basque region and established more of a direct economic rivalry between the different national bourgeoisies.

Damoiix

San Sebastián, Spain, April 2013: Protesters form human wall to prevent arrest of Basque nationalist activists.

EU Fuels National Chauvinism

While the Catalan bourgeoisie remains divided over the question of independence, all sides, including those that favor secession, are committed to the reactionary imperialist EU. The Catalan bourgeoisie has profited from the EU and, despite the devastation wrought by EU-imposed austerity, many working people in Catalonia who support independence favor staying in the EU.

The ICL has stood from the outset in principled opposition to the imperialist EU and its monetary instrument, the euro. The EU is an unstable consortium of rival capitalist states, dominated by the main imperialist powers, principally Germany. These powers seek to increase their competitive edge against their U.S. and Japanese imperialist rivals, exploit the workers throughout Europe and subordinate the weaker European countries like Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland as well as those in East Europe. Through the mechanism of the euro zone, Germany and other creditor states demand that debtor countries become more "competitive" by slashing wages, pensions and social spending. Recognizing that the euro would be an instrument of the EU imperialists, the ICL opposed its introduction. We stated that capitalism is organized on a national basis and that a common European currency was not viable.

For all the Catalan bourgeoisie's talk of attaining "fiscal sovereignty" and opposing Madrid-imposed austerity, its pledge to stay in the EU means ceding control over interest rates, spending and monetary policy to Frankfurt and Brussels. And the imperialist masters of the EU have made clear that they don't look kindly upon secessionist moves that could further destabilize the capitalist order in Europe. Thus, German chancellor Angela Merkel last August made a point of conspicuously supporting Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy against any move toward independence by Catalonia.

The EU rulers have whipped up nationalism, pitting workers in countries like Germany, Britain and France against those in weaker countries. The failure of the reformist workers parties and trade-union bureaucrats to oppose the EU has spurred the growth of reactionary and outright fascist forces that channel discontent over austerity into hatred of immigrants and Muslims in particular. Maintaining vulnerable layers of workers with few legal rights helps the capitalists drive down wages and working conditions for everyone. In opposition to these divide-and-rule schemes we say: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!***

Opposing all forms of nationalism, we seek to lay the programmatic foundations for building revolutionary workers parties as part of a reforged, Trotskyist Fourth International. Only such parties can lead the working class in seizing the means of production and expropriating the bourgeoisie internationally through a series of socialist revolutions. Instead, reformist leftists promote the fantasy of building a "social Europe" under capitalism. *Down with the imperialist EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!*

Sipa

Fascists in Barcelona rally against November 9 referendum on independence for Catalonia.

Free All Basque Nationalists Now!

The workers movement in Spain and France must forthrightly oppose the sinister crusade by the Spanish and French states against the petty-bourgeois nationalists of Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) and their sympathizers. The reformist misleaders of the PSOE and the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) have instead spent years lining workers up behind the Castilian bourgeoisie and against the Basques. In the campaign against the Basques, Madrid has banned political parties and protests, shut down newspapers and rounded up sympathizers of Basque independence—repressive measures that have been used throughout Spanish history to crush militant workers' struggles also.

On January 10, more than 75,000 people marched in the streets of Bilbao to demand an end to the Spanish state's practice of "dispersing" Basque nationalist prisoners to far-flung locations, with protesters raising chants demanding freedom and "total amnesty" for Basque militants. Two days later, the Spanish state carried out raids in four cities, using charges of money laundering and tax evasion to arrest 16 people dedicated to the legal defense of Basque activists. Those victimized included 12 lawyers, many of whom were due in court in Madrid for the start of a trial of 35 people charged with belonging to a terrorist organization.

As part of this transparent political witchhunt, the Civil Guard searched the offices of organizations including the pro-independence Basque trade union Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak (Commissions of Patriotic Workers), which represents tens of thousands of Basque workers. There they seized 90,000 euros in small bills and coins that had been collected at the demonstration two days earlier. We demand the dropping of all charges! ***Down with anti-Basque repression!***

While we Marxists oppose ETA's nationalist outlook as well as the petty-bourgeois strategy of individual terrorism it once practiced (ETA has now renounced armed struggle), we defend ETA against state repression. Acts of retribution against individual representatives of the capitalist state and ruling class are a losing substitute for, and obstacle to, the necessary struggle to replace the entire rotting capitalist system by mobilizing the social power of the working class in socialist revolution. While the acts that Basque militants have carried out against the capitalist state and its agents are not a crime from the standpoint of working people, the reactionary logic of nationalism leads to appalling acts of indiscriminate terror as well, such as ETA's criminal bombing of a supermarket in a working-class suburb of Barcelona in 1987. Such crimes have served only to drive Catalan and Spanish workers further into the arms of their own chauvinist bourgeoisies.

The Origins and Character of Catalan Nationalism

Catalonia has long had a strong sense of regional identity, with its own language, Catalan, now spoken by over ten million people in Catalonia as well as the Balearic Islands, northern Catalonia and Valencia. As a feudal principality under the Spanish crown, Catalonia repeatedly came into conflict with the monarchy. It was highly symbolic that the November 9 referendum took place around the time of the 300th anniversary of the defeat of the Catalan principality in the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714. Catalonia had backed the Habsburg claim to the Spanish throne against the Bourbons and was punished by the Bourbon victors with the suppression of its parliament and traditional liberties. (As a result of that war, Louis XIV, a Bourbon himself, consolidated France's hold on Roussillon, the part of Catalonia north of the Pyrenees.) Known as *la Diada*, the

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day of Catalonia's surrender, 11 September 1714, is today commemorated as the National Day of Catalonia.

The birth of Catalan nationalism dates not to a war over royal succession but to the era of the consolidation of industrial capitalism in the 19th century. It was through the emergence of textile manufacturing in the 18th century in Barcelona that a nascent bourgeoisie first appeared in Spain. Catalan capitalism developed after the lifting of restrictions on trade with Spain's colonies in 1780. The Catalan bourgeoisie thrived especially on the colonial rape of Cuba, where slavery was abolished only in 1886.

By the late 19th century, Catalonia and the Basque region had become the main industrial centers of Spain, with Basque industry centered on metallurgy and Catalan industry on light manufacturing. As the Catalan bourgeoisie came together to lobby the central government for protection of its industries, a Catalan intellectual elite increasingly saw itself as the leading voice for modernization in Spain. The 19th-century cultural movement known as the "Renaissance," which promoted the Catalan language and arts, was a reflection of these economic and political developments.

Outside of the centers of Basque and Catalan industry, most of Spain remained mired in backwardness well into the 20th century. Dating back to the 16th century, the Spanish Habsburg monarchy helped suppress development toward a unified nation-state and encouraged regional divisions. Accumulating gold and silver from the mines in Latin America, the crown was hostile to the growth of trade and manufacturing within the Spanish territories of the Iberian Peninsula. A decadent monarchy and its medieval, obscurantist Catholic church ruled over a huge peasantry, which toiled under a landowning class derived from the old feudal nobility. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky noted: "Spain's retarded economic development inevitably weakened the centralist tendencies inherent in capitalism.... The meagerness of the national resources and the feeling of restlessness all over the country could not help but foster separatist tendencies" ("The Revolution in Spain," January 1931).

As large numbers of workers from different parts of Spain flooded into the Basque and Catalan industries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Catalonia became a center of working-class radicalism. Catalan nationalism was therefore characterized from its inception both by a timid fight for regional autonomy and support for the Spanish state's suppression of workers' struggle. Early nationalist organizations like the Lliga Regionalista (Regionalist League) stood for the repression of the convulsive wave of struggles that swept Catalonia in the early 20th century, from the Barcelona General Strike of 1902 and the anti-militarist, anti-clerical revolt known as the Tragic Week of 1909 to the General Strike of 1917 and the Barcelona lockout of 1919-20. It was fear of working-class revolt that led the Catalan bourgeoisie to support Miguel Primo de Rivera's military coup of 1923. His regime proceeded to repress Catalonia's limited self-rule, suppress the Catalan language and even shut down the Barcelona football club!

In 1930, in the aftermath of the onset of the Great Depression, the Primo de Rivera regime, already rotting from within, fell, ushering in a period of mass workers struggles in Spain. Following the collapse of the monarchy in 1931, a capitalist Republican government was formed, headed by a coalition of bourgeois Republicans with the Socialists. Under this regime, an autonomous Catalan regional government known as the Generalitat was formed, led by the bourgeois-nationalist Esquerra Republicana.

Agustí Centelles

Barcelona, 19 July 1936: Workers man barricade during Spanish Civil War.

But the spectre of workers revolution drove the bulk of the Catalan bourgeoisie to support Franco's counterrevolutionary forces in Spain's Civil War of 1936-39. The Catalan bourgeoisie understood very well that Spain's workers and peasants, who had been inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, were fighting not merely for a more democratic form of government but for a social revolution to end their exploitation and oppression. So the Catalan capitalists put their class interests ahead of their national aspirations, which were again to be crushed under the boot of Francoist repression.

Reformist Misleaders Betray Workers' Struggle

Catalan nationalists today hold up Esquerra leader Lluís Companys, the president of the regional government when it fell to Franco, as a hero-martyr. In fact, Companys along with the Stalinist Communists, the Socialists and the anarchists sat in the Generalitat government that bloodily repressed the working-class insurrection of the Barcelona May Days of 1937. The Stalinists led the assault on the workers, but it was the leaders of the anarchists and the centrist Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM, which had earlier been part of the Catalan government) who were instrumental in persuading the workers to take down their barricades. This was a pivotal event in the defeat of the Spanish Revolution.

The betrayal of workers revolution showed vividly that the policy of forming a popular-front alliance with bourgeois parties like the Esquerra in Catalonia was utterly suicidal for the working class. As we wrote about the Barcelona May Days in "Trotskyism vs. Popular Frontism in the Spanish Civil War" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 61, Spring 2009):

> "Power was in the grasp of the heroic Barcelona workers. Yet by week's end, the workers had been disarmed and their barricades dismantled—a result not of military defeat but of sabotage, confusion and defeatism sown by the workers' misleaders.... Victory in Barcelona could have led to a workers and peasants Spain and set Europe aflame in revolutionary struggle on the eve of World War II. Defeat opened the way to intense repression, including the suppression of the POUM and the murder or imprisonment of its leaders. Having thus disarmed the proletariat, the popular front opened the gates to Franco's forces and a bloody reign of rightist reaction."

While the working class of Spain paid for the popular-front betrayals of its leaders with blood, the reformist misleaders never abandoned the politics of class collaboration. The rapid industrialization of Spain through large foreign investment in the 1960s and early '70s increased the size and self-confidence of the working class, which heroically challenged the Franco regime in its dying days. Following Franco's death in 1975, Spain exploded in a wave of protests and strikes against the regime's brutal suppression of trade unions, leftist parties and national minorities. However, the leaders of the PSOE and the PCE sought to rein in these struggles and channeled them toward a "peaceful" transition to bourgeois democracy. The PSOE and PCE supported the 1978 constitution that recognized Franco's chosen successor, King Juan Carlos, as head of state of a Spanish "nation." Today, the PCE sellouts have the audacity to call for a referendum to get rid of Spain's corrupt monarchy.

The situation today is very different from the period of the Civil War and the workers' insurgency in the mid-late 1970s. Marxists have to take this into account in dealing with the concretes of the national question. The recognition of the *right* of a given nation to secede does not necessarily mean that one would advocate secession at a particular time. Lenin often used the analogy of the recognition of the right of divorce, which of course does not mean that one demands the dissolution of any and every marriage.

At the time of the Civil War, the Catalan and Basque proletariat stood at the head of their class in a revolutionary situation that posed pointblank the possibility of overcoming national divisions through the workers coming to power. It would have made no sense to advocate independence at that time. But for some years now, it has been evident that relations between the Basque and Spanish workers have been poisoned. And in Catalonia today, discontent within the proletariat is increasingly manifesting itself not in an assimilationist direction—i.e., seeing its fate as joined with that of the Spanish proletariat—but rather in pronounced separatist sentiments.

Rotten Social Democrats and Bourgeois Populists

The PSOE demonstrated its hatred for oppressed nationalities when it unleashed death squads, dubbed "anti-terrorist liberation groups" (GAL), against the Basque people in the 1980s. Today the PSOE is united with the ruling PP in chauvinist opposition to a Catalan referendum. It calls for making Spain a federation, in which Catalonia would supposedly have greater powers. This amounts to minor tinkering with the existing setup of regional autonomy, the essential point being that Catalonia will remain under the thumb of Castilian chauvinism. A similar position for a federated bourgeois state is held by the Izquierda Unida (IU) coalition, led by the PCE.

The post-1978 political order in Spain is unraveling. The parties that have dominated the electoral arena, the PSOE and PP, have both undergone a sharp drop in support, associated with their implementation of widely hated austerity measures. The presumption of a unitary Spain has been challenged in Catalonia and elsewhere.

Stepping into this breach with the mission of refurbishing Spanish bourgeois democracy is the Podemos party, a formation based on the petty bourgeoisie that issued out of the 2011 Indignados movement. Podemos is totally committed to maintaining the EU. Like the Indignados movement—and like its Greek counterpart Syriza—the populist Podemos claims to represent all classes of people against the political and business elites, which it has dubbed "la casta" (the caste). Podemos' populism is designed to obscure the understanding that the fundamental division in society is class and that only the proletariat, through the seizure of power and the destruction of capitalism in all countries, can eliminate exploitation. As Marxists, we oppose Podemos on principle as a bourgeois party.

AP

Bloody dictator Francisco Franco (right) with his chosen successor, Prince Juan Carlos, January 1971.

While claiming to uphold Catalonia's "right to decide," Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias stated in a 27 December 2014 interview with *El Periódico* that a "unilateral declaration" of independence is not possible and that Podemos therefore proposes a "constitutional process." This amounts to a negation of the right of Catalonian self-determination, which means the right of the ***people of Catalonia—not a Spanish constitutional process***—to decide whether or not to secede.

Podemos' popularity has predictably attracted a gaggle of opportunist pseudo-Marxists to its orbit. Shameless lawyers for Podemos, the En Lucha (In Struggle) group affiliated with the British Socialist Workers Party declared: "Pablo Iglesias is not a Lenin, but it is better for everyone to fight against capitalism in a framework in which Podemos is strong." While tailing Podemos, which opposes "unilateral" independence for Catalonia, En Lucha in

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Chicago...

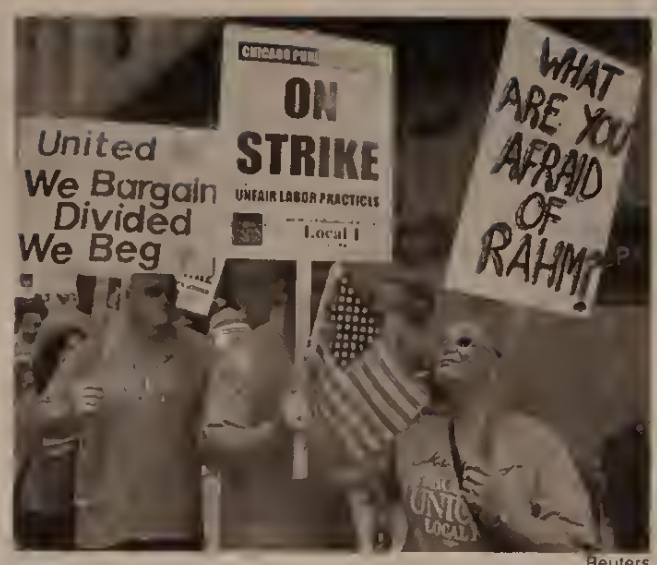
(continued from page 1)

take her place. Forces from national teachers unions to radical black professor Cornel West and the liberal MoveOn.org quickly jumped on Garcia's bandwagon. In reality, Garcia's campaign platform made clear that his "friend of labor" credentials were just lipstick on a pig. Among other lowlights, he upheld a 2007 state law enacted by Democrats that jacked up transit workers' mandatory retirement contributions by more than 400 percent!

The journal *In These Times* surely spoke for many reformist leftists in painting Lewis's withdrawal from the race as a "huge blow." Encouraged to run as an independent for the mayoral race, Lewis is a Democratic politician with or without the label. In fact, Lewis is a longtime ally of Chicago's own Jesse Jackson and a loyal Democratic Party supporter. The same goes for the leaderships of teachers unions nationally, who have handed over tens of millions of dollars in union dues to Democratic candidates and supplied hundreds of delegates to the last Democratic National Convention.

The labor bureaucracy, including the CTU leadership, represents a conservative, pro-capitalist layer at the top of these workers organizations. This layer is far removed from the militants who built the unions in this country by class-struggle methods, often in defiance of anti-labor laws and court injunctions. For Marxists, independence from the Democrats is not mainly a question of formal affiliation but means organizing the working people in uncompromising opposition to the capitalist class enemy and all bourgeois political formations.

On principle, we never vote for, or otherwise extend political support to, any capitalist politician, Emanuel and Garcia included. In Chicago and beyond, the Democrats have ruled by mastering ethnic "divide and rule" politics to mask the common interests of the working people and oppressed. Our aim is to build a workers party independent of and opposed to the Democrats and Republicans, one that champions the cause of all the exploited and the oppressed in the fight for socialist revolution.



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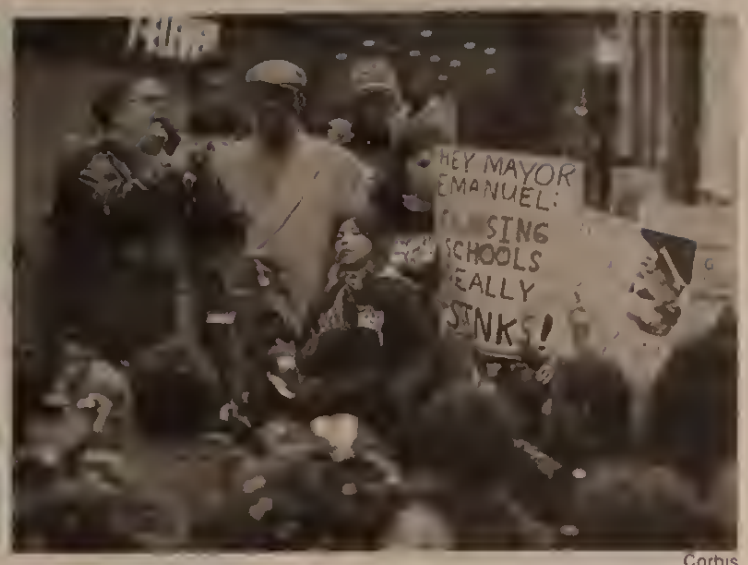

Corbis

Left: Teachers strike against Emanuel's attacks on their union and public schools, September 2012. Right: Chicago Teachers Union president Karen Lewis addresses rally protesting school closings, March 2013.

Democratic Party of Massive Cutbacks

All it took was some vague "little guy" rhetoric for Garcia to become a darling of the "anybody but Emanuel" crowd. The "fight the right" refrain usually is the excuse to vote the Democrats into office in order to keep out the Republicans, but here the only contenders were Democrats, reflecting the party's lock on the city. Showing the futility of supporting the "lesser evil" Democrats, in Illinois, as in other Midwest states, workers are facing an onslaught of union-busting government attacks. From the state legislature in Springfield to City Hall in Chicago, for decades it has been the Democrats who have looted public worker pension funds, while working to hamstring the unions.

Shortly after taking office as mayor in 2011, Emanuel canceled a 4 percent pay hike previously negotiated by the CTU and laid off almost 1,000 teachers. Later that year, Democrats pushed through a new state law dictating more school hours and a longer school year without any additional pay for teachers. The bill, ludicrously supported by the CTU executive board, also required 75 percent of the union membership to authorize teachers strikes. In 2012, the teachers voted overwhelmingly for a strike that succeeded in holding the line against some of Emanuel's demands. However, the union leadership agreed in advance not to make school closings a strike issue.

Now the governor's mansion has been taken over by a nut job free-market Republican, venture capitalist Bruce Rauner, who has called for *lowering* the minimum wage and slashing social spending, while vowing to bold back union dues collected for the state's public-sector unions. Rauner's aggressive posture is a gift to the Democrats, enabling them to come across as reasonable by comparison. In fact, despite minor policy differences, Repuhlicans and Democrats are fundamentally united around austerity. For example, last month Rauner and Democratic House majority leader Michael Madigan (for decades the real boss of Illinois politics) agreed to a "short-term" service-slashing budget "fix." It is no secret that Madigan, Emanuel and Rauner are all sharpening their knives for a deal to carve up the public employee pension plans to pay off the banks and balance the state and city budgets.

The trademarked response of the labor bureaucracy to union-busting onslaughts was displayed in Wisconsin in 2011, when

Catalonia...

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Catalonia works with the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (CUP—Candidacy for Popular Unity), whose goal is an independent Catalan government headed by the two main bourgeois parties there.

The Language Question

The question of language policy has been a major flashpoint for Castilian chauvinist reaction in Spain. The minority languages were officially repressed by the state under Franco. The 1978 constitution imposed Castilian (Spanish) as the official language of the state, which all have the duty to know. If you were to believe the chauvinist hysteria, Spanish is supposedly under threat and Spanish speakers are victims of terrible discrimination in Catalonia. That this is a complete fiction is confirmed by the fact that 99 percent of the population over the age of 15 in Catalonia can speak Spanish (with a literacy level of 95 percent). In Catalonia, most people also have facility in Catalan. Some 80 percent can speak Catalan, and Catalan literacy is at 60 percent.

The Madrid government's sponsorship of a 2012 education reform bill that aims to recentralize education powers, foster religion and "Hispanicize" Catalan pupils prompted mass protests. The Catalan regional High Court ruled in 2014 that 25 percent of a school's curriculum must be taught in Castilian Spanish if a single pupil requests it. This amounts to a naked attempt to impose Spanish-language instruction in schools in Catalonia. Similar policies are being pursued in the Balearic Islands.

The autonomous region's language "normalization" law of 1983 gave Catalan privileged status in education, state administration and the media. In the mid 1990s, Catalonia began to provide primary and secondary school instruction exclusively in Catalan, with a few hours of Spanish language and literature a week. The 2006 statute of autonomy stipulated "the right and obligation to have a sufficient oral and written knowledge of Catalan and Castilian upon completing compulsory education." The same statute asserted that it was a "duty" for people living in Catalonia to know both official languages, Catalan and Castilian.

A major concern of the Catalan Generalitat was to ensure that second-generation immigrants learn Catalan. There were two large waves of immigration to Catalonia in the postwar period—the first in the 1950s and '60s from other areas of Spain and another several decades later from Latin America, East Europe and North Africa.

As Marxists, we warn against those who seek to divide the working class on the pretext of defending a particular "national culture," which as in Catalonia inevitably discriminates against other nationalities. Thus, today an essential condition for getting a job in the public sector in Catalonia is knowledge of Catalan. We are against the imposition of any official languages. We demand equal language rights for all! We are for a public, secular, ethnically integrated school system with full provisions for instruction in Spanish, Catalan and other languages as needed by the local population. These rights apply to speakers of Arabic and Romanian as much as to those whose native language is Catalan or Castilian.

Demotix

Workers in Barcelona during one-day general strike across Spain against capitalist austerity measures, 14 November 2012.

Forge a Leninist Party!

Lenin stressed that "the national programme of working-class democracy is: absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language; the solution of the problem of the political self-determination of nations, that is, their separation as states by completely free, democratic methods" (*Critical Remarks on the National Question* [1913]). Through adherence to such a program, the Bolsheviks were able to rally the working people—Russians, Jews, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Ukrainians, etc. to overthrow the rule of the capitalists and landlords in October 1917.

The national question is today posed with burning intensity in Spain. Championing the independence of Catalonia and the Basque country provides an acid test of the ability of any workers organization in Spain to oppose its own bourgeoisie. Those parties that have betrayed the proletariat in the past, such as PSOE and PCE/IU, not surprisingly are now lined up behind the Spanish capitalists in seeking to maintain the "unity" of the Spanish bourgeois state, which many times over has had the blood of the workers and oppressed nationalities on its hands.

The terrible economic crisis ravaging workers and the poor in Spain and elsewhere cries out for workers revolution and the establishment of a soviet federation of workers republics in the Iberian peninsula, part of a Socialist United States of Europe. The crucial instrumentality for this is a Leninist-Trotskyist party, which must be built as part of the fight to reforge the Fourth International. Such a party will incorporate dearly purchased lessons from Spain's own history, particularly those laid out by Trotsky and his comrades in the 1930s on the need for proletarian independence from all bourgeois forces. ■

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100,000 angry unionists who massed at the state capitol looking for a way to fight back were funneled straight into a campaign to recall the Republican governor. Since then, "right to work" (prohibiting the union shop) has taken root in one Midwest state after another, including most recently in Wisconsin. Forswearing the mobilization of labor's social power in strikes and solidarity actions, the union misleaders continue to push the election of Democrats as their only "answer" to capitalist attacks on union rights and to declining standards of living.

Break with the Democrats!

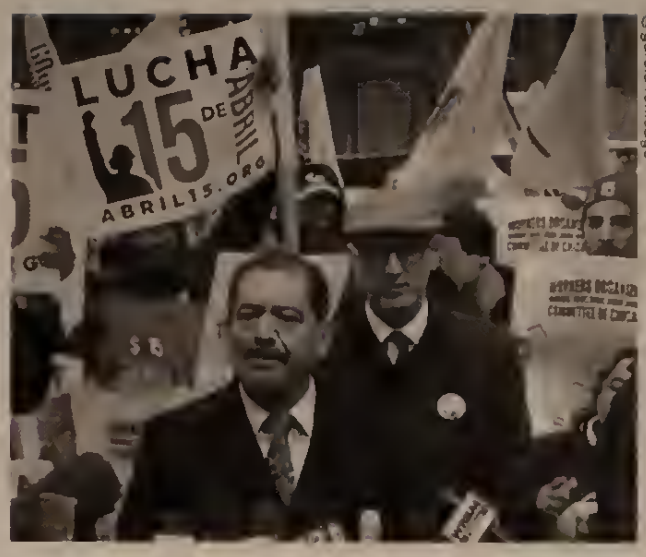
The national attention to the Chicago election reflected broader tensions within the Democratic Party between Wall Street Democrats like Obama and Hillary Clinton and forces favoring more populist candidates such as Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren and New York mayor Bill de Blasio. Seven years ago, it was the relatively unknown Barack Obama who spoke of "hope" and "change." Now that disillusionment with Obama's policies has set in, a new cast of Democratic wannabes wants the party to refurbish its image.

In the Chicago mayoral elections, the trade-union misleaders were working overtime to turn out voters for either Emanuel or Garcia, based on who they thought was more likely to win, or more likely to toss loyal supporters a few more bread crumbs off the table. Construction craft unions, many Teamsters locals and the firefighters lined up behind Emanuel, with UNITE HERE Local 1 airing nauseating "Rahm Love" TV ads. Other labor leaders, particularly from unions with a large proportion of black members, lined up behind Garcia, who was endorsed by the ATU transit union, the SEIU health care workers and National Nurses United. The CTU bureaucrats even urged teachers to stay in town during spring break to help get out the vote for "Chuy."

The reformist left rivaled the trade-union tops in scrambling to make it seem as though something important was at stake in this election. The Communist Party touted the birth of a "new kind of people's movement" (peoplesworld.org, 3 April). The Party for Socialism and Liberation enthused over Garcia's "progressive credentials" and the possibility that he would initiate "badly needed reforms for working and poor people" (liberationnews.org, 1 March). Socialist Alternative cheered that Karen Lewis's candidacy had opened up "the possibility of a labor backed, combative election campaign to challenge the Democratic Party establishment," and advised Garcia to mount a "real fighting challenge to the corporate elite and their servants in the political establishment" (March 8). These groups and others like them differed only over whether to be open or backhanded in supporting Garcia.

ISO: Gooey for "Chuy"

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) publicly aired a debate over whether to vote for Garcia. While the ISO has not openly campaigned for Democratic candidates, it makes its preferences clear: when Obama ran for president, the ISO did not actually say workers should vote for him, but ISO spokesman Sharon Smith crowed after the fact that "Obama's victory also represents a surge in class consciousness and a decisive rejection of neoliberal policies." The program of these opportunists is to pressure the Democrats but they prefer to express it at one remove, for example by backing the Greens, a small-time capitalist party whose function is to corral disaffected Democratic voters back into the fold.



March 25: Phony "friend of labor" Garcia and, behind him, CTU vice president Jesse Sharkey, long supported by International Socialist Organization.

Over the Chicago elections, the ISO seemed torn: while trying to reassure its readers who worried that the group's mild criticisms of Garcia would make them "irrelevant" in the eyes of the masses, the ISO stopped short of following CTU vice president Jesse Sharkey into Garcia's camp. Sharkey boasted that he was out electioneering for Garcia in the frigid Chicago winter, and rhapsodized about hugging his candidate in celebration of Garcia's getting into the runoff. The ISO has always strongly supported the CTU caucus led by Karen Lewis and Sharkey, and columns by Sharkey have been featured in the ISO's paper, so this public divergence represents a dilemma for it. (As for Sharkey's courtship of Garcia, the only tragedy in the latter's defeat is that we will not get to see if it would have ended in a wedding or a broken heart.)

Given the disappointment in Obama expressed even by many black workers and others who still support him, the ISO is surely aware that unalloyed enthusiasm for today's Democrats would be unwise. So an article by Lee Sustar and others in *Socialist Worker* (March 17) duly takes note of Garcia's shortcomings before offering that "an article on the mayoral runoff can and should also show what we have in common with the militants in the CTU and beyond who are supporting Garcia." Translation: we too support the lesser evil...for the millionth time.

Chicago: Divide and Rule

Chicago is the quintessential American city, where contradictions of race and class are raw. Historically, the fault line has been between blacks and whites but today the city is nearly a third Latino, adding another element into the mix. Unemployment in black ghettos is four times as high as in white neighborhoods, and black youth unemployment is estimated as high as 92 percent. The black South and West Sides are riddled with boarded-up "zombie" homes and apartment buildings, urban decay exacerbated by the subprime mortgage scams. Today in Chicago, the rate of racist police "stop and frisks" is *three times* the rate at its highest in New York City.

The ethnic constituency politics that the Democratic Party specializes in were much in evidence in these elections. The Mexican-American immigrant Garcia gained over two-thirds of the votes in Latino wards. What clinched the election for Emanuel was winning nearly 60 percent of the black vote; he took every black ward in the city. That fact reflected not only his ties to Obama, who flew into town to bolster support for his henchman before the February election, but also the rivalries that emerge from competition between ethnic groups in a capitalist society for what is seen as a fixed (or shrinking) pie. One black man was quoted by the *New York Times* (3 April): "I ain't voting for a Mexican," adding that he was tired of competing with Latinos for jobs. It is the task of revolutionaries to actively combat such backward attitudes among the oppressed. We seek to win black militants to the defense of immigrants, and Latinos to the understanding that the racist oppression of the black population is the bedrock upon which American capitalism was built.

Garcia and his cheerleaders invoke memories of the 1983 election of Chicago's first black mayor, Harold Washington, who built a coalition of blacks, a majority of Latinos and liberal whites under the slogan "It's our turn." Although Washington's election was met with a barrage of racist reaction, the reality is that he served as the enforcer of Reaganomics—wholesale attacks on the social services gained through earlier class and social struggles. It didn't take Washington long to go after the very unions that had supported his election. He pushed a bill looting the ATU pension fund, introducing part-time jobs and tearing up the union contract. In 1988, teachers went out on strike against attacks on education and jobs.

A central demand of Washington's 1983 campaign was to fire the racist cop commissioner, Richard Brzeczek. And the mayor replaced Brzeczek with a black police commissioner. This made not one whit of difference to racist cop terror in the city; throughout the Washington years, the notorious "midnight crew" under police commander Jon Burge continued to extract confessions from black men though such interrogation techniques as battery clamps to the genitals. Washington's black top cop, Fred Rice, twice promoted Burge even after the allegations of torture began to surface. This February, the London *Guardian* ran a series of articles documenting continued torture of black men by Chicago police to extract confessions, including at a "black site" detention center at Homan Square where arrestees are held, their location unknown to their families or lawyers.

For all the nonsense spouted recently about re-creating Harold Washington's supposed rainbow coalition, the falling out among Democrats in the mayoral squabble only underscored the black-Latino division (among others) in Chicago. For a taste of the possibility of uniting the working people, one can look back to the 2012 teachers strike, even hamstrung as it was by its leadership. Many black and Latino parents supported the strike, some joining the picket lines. The basis for this cooperation was not mutual affection but common interest: parents along with teachers had everything to gain by fighting to defend public education against further cutbacks and layoffs.

Through class struggle, the different layers of the working people can come to understand their unity of interests, a necessary part of which is rejecting the suicidal illusions of common interests with our exploiters. What is required is a revolutionary workers party based on the program of socialism—the fight to meet the needs of all of society by destroying the capitalist profit system itself. Our reformist opponents endlessly recycle their bankrupt strategy of supporting "progressive" Democrats, who make promises to the working people only to turn around and kick them in the teeth once they are in office. Believing the fight for socialism to be utopian, these fake socialists have nothing to offer except the truly hopeless prospect of reforming the system of brutal capitalist exploitation.

As we said in "Harold Washington Will Betray Black Chicago" (*WV* No. 328, 22 April 1983), at the time of his first mayoral victory:

> "If it is to be 'our turn' to rule for blacks, workers, Hispanics and the poor they must break with the Democratic Party and find within their ranks the class-conscious leaders that can forge a fighting workers party determined to wage ***class war*** for power. Chicago may be the most segregated city in America but it has a powerful working class with an enormous potential for integrated class struggle."■

Canada...

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> directly linked to technological and scientific progress."

"Acceptance of the Enlightenment project," he concludes, "infuses the left's political stands on the Aboriginal question, and it conditions their reading of Marx."

Of course Marxism does value technological progress, and it is forward-looking, as (I would add) human societies have always been. Modern societies share a great deal with "traditional" ones, which also sought to better understand and master nature—and frequently other humans—in order to survive and thrive. Even spiritualism based on mythological beliefs was an early attempt to better understand the natural world in ways that could help to secure human survival.

Technological progress is necessary but not sufficient to human progress. Workers rule is needed to establish social equality—which today can be achieved only on the basis of material abundance—and lay the basis for the abolition of private property and the eventual withering away of the state. At the end of *Ancient Society*, Morgan paints a vista of the future which I find inspiring:

> "The time will come, nevertheless, when human intelligence will rise to the mastery over property, and define the relations of the state to the property it protects, as well as the obligations and the limits of the rights of its owners. The interests of society are paramount to individual interests, and the two must be brought into just and harmonious relations. A mere property career is not the final destiny of mankind, if progress is to be the law of the future as it has been of the past.... Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges and universal education, foreshadow the next higher plane of society to which experience, intelligence and knowledge are steadily tending. It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes."

Morgan's vision of a renaissance of "primitive communist" egalitarianism combined with modern technology could easily be dismissed as idealist utopianism. But what Marxism provides is an understanding that the working class, by virtue of its relation to the means of production, can be the necessary instrumentality to make this vision a material reality.

Native people cannot have a decent future under capitalism. Only the destruction of the rulers' profit system and construction of a socialist society can redress centuries of crimes against the aboriginal peoples of this country. The fight against Native oppression provides a litmus test for those aspiring to lead the working class. A party that does not champion the defense of the most oppressed will never succeed in leading the workers to victory over their class enemies. We seek to build a Marxist vanguard party that champions the cause of all the oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Spain
Independence for Catalonia and for the Basque Country!

Last November, 2.3 million people in Catalonia defied the central government of Spain and voted in an unofficial referendum on independence. More than 80 percent of those who voted answered yes to both questions posed: "Do you want Catalonia to be a State?" and "If so, do you want Catalonia to be an independent State?" The vote was the culmination of years of growing pro-independence sentiment in this region of 7.5 million people in the northeast of Spain. The rabid chauvinism of the Castilian bourgeoisie, coupled with European Union (EU)-imposed economic austerity, has brought to the fore the centuries-old divisions between the central government and Spain's smaller, oppressed nationalities, such as the Catalans.

The massive participation in the November 9 vote was a powerful riposte to the Spanish parliament's decision last April to outlaw a referendum on independence. It was also a clear indication that the direction of national sentiment in Catalonia is strongly toward separation from Spain and not toward assimilation. In accordance with this, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) demands: ***Independence for Catalonia!***

Reuters

Barcelona, 11 September 2014: Mass demonstration on National Day of Catalonia in lead-up to unofficial referendum on independence.

As revolutionary Marxists, our advocacy of Catalonia's secession from Spain is aimed at removing the question of national oppression from the agenda in order to bring to the fore the necessity for a fight by the working class against the capitalist class enemy in both Spain and Catalonia. The capitalist rulers, whether Castilian or Catalan, use nationalism to obscure the fact that working people do not share a common interest with their "own" exploiters and to sow divisions between workers of different nationalities. An independent Catalonia would demonstrate more clearly to the workers there that the Catalan bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists are no fighters for liberation from exploitation and social oppression. Independence would also shake up the capitalist order in the rest of Spain as well as give a jolt to the imperialist EU, which would help open the road to class struggle.

We reject the assertion by the Castilian bourgeoisie and Spain's monarchy of the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation." This was enshrined in the bourgeois-democratic constitution adopted in 1978, three years after the death of General Francisco Franco, whose bonapartist dictatorship held sway for almost 40 years. The Spanish constitution explicitly denies the democratic right of self-determination for Catalans, Basques and Galicians, which are distinct nationalities with their own languages. The ICL has always upheld the right to self-determination of these oppressed nations in Spain.

A central obstacle to working-class unity in Spain in the post-Franco period has been the extreme chauvinism directed at the Basque people. There has been a long struggle for Basque independence. Every "democratic" government, including under the Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), has continued the Franco dictatorship's bloody campaign of terror against Basque separatism. The profound divisions between workers in the Basque region and those in the rest of Spain are reflected in the predominance of separate, nationalist trade unions in the Basque country. It has been evident for some time that these divisions cannot be overcome except through the struggle for independence for the Basques. While the ICL has long upheld the right of the Basques to secede and vigorously defended Basque victims of capitalist state repression, we have been remiss in not advocating Basque independence until now. ***Independence for the Basque country!***

There does not currently appear to be mass sentiment for independence in the part of the Basque country lying across the northern border of Spain in France, or in northern Catalonia in France, where Catalan is spoken. The Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the ICL, nonetheless upholds the right to self-determination of the Basques and Catalans, i.e., their right to secede from the French state. This would include the right to join an independent Catalonia or Basque country. The ICL also upholds the right of other Catalan-speaking regions of Spain, such as the Balearic Islands, to join an independent Catalonia. Our call for independence for Catalonia and the Basque country is an application of the Leninist position recognizing the right to self-determination of all nations. As Lenin wrote in his 1916 *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*:

> "The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and for a referendum on secession by the seceding nation."

Only by supporting independence for Catalonia and the Basque country can the proletariat in Spain demonstrate that it opposes the national chauvinism of its own ruling class, enabling it to win the confidence and class solidarity of workers in the oppressed nations and remove suspicion or distrust. At the same time, the workers of the oppressed Catalan and Basque nations must struggle for political independence from their respective national bourgeoisies, which wield the call for "national liberation" as a tool for deceiving and dividing the workers along national lines.

Bourgeois Rivalries in Multinational Spain

The Castilian bourgeoisie's determination to prevent any prospect of an independent Catalonia or Basque country is in no small part due to the fact that these are among the most industrialized and economically productive regions of Spain, with huge concentrations of finance capital. Today, Catalonia (with 16 percent of the total population) contributes about 20 percent of Spain's gross domestic product. The second-largest bank in Spain is the Basque Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria (BBVA), which has extensive investments in Latin America. A retired Spanish army colonel snarled in a 2012 interview: "The independence of Catalonia? Over my dead body and those of many others." Given Spain's bloody history, these are not idle threats.

Following the collapse of Spain's real estate bubble in 2008 and an ensuing financial crisis, part of the world economic depression, the imperialist rulers of the EU and the Spanish bourgeoisie have subjected working people to mass layoffs and savage austerity, with over 5.4 million currently out of work. This situation has fueled bourgeois nationalism on all sides.

The national ruling party, the Popular Party (PP), descends politically from Francoism and embodies pro-monarchy, right-wing Catholic reaction. It has intensified anti-Catalan sentiment in a transparent attempt to distract attention from the bourgeoisie's responsibility for the ongoing economic crisis. For years, the PP has blocked attempts by Catalonia to gain greater

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Down With the European Union!
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1067

1 May 2015

Black Baltimore's Justified Rage

Perna/Baltimore Sun

Reuters

Left: Riot police outside Baltimore building set ablaze during April 27 unrest following the funeral of Freddie Gray, victim of racist cop terror. Right: Demonstrator confronts cops at protest two days earlier.

APRIL 28—Following yesterday's funeral of 25-year-old Freddie Gray, whose spinal cord was almost completely severed when he was arrested, inner-city Baltimore exploded, with black youth battling phalanxes of riot cops and state troopers. Maryland's Republican governor declared a state of emergency, deploying over a thousand National Guard troops, while Baltimore's black Democratic Party mayor imposed a nighttime curfew. As of this morning over 200 people have been arrested. The bourgeois media rant against "thugs" and "criminals," providing a pretext for the cops to spill more blood. *National Guard out now! Down with the cops' state of siege! Free all those arrested and drop all charges!*

Baltimore has long been notorious for the racist cop terror that is the norm across the U.S. In this majority black city, conditions of life in its destitute inner city are a microcosm of the brutal reality that defines life for the black masses across America: segregation, police terror, wrenching poverty and decaying houses and schools. The life and death of Freddie Gray stands as bitter testimony. Poisoned as a child by lead paint in the decrepit housing his family lived in, Gray grew up on the mean streets of West Baltimore. He was treated as a criminal by the racist cops who repeatedly arrested him on petty charges like having "gaming cards, dice." What led to Gray's fatal arrest was the "crime" of making eye contact with a cop and then fleeing.

Thrown violently to the ground and pinned down with a cop's knee on his

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Walter Scott Gunned Down in Charleston

Racist Cop Terror: Time for Labor to Take a Stand

The widely viewed video images from North Charleston, South Carolina, are yet another grim reminder of the racist police terror that is a daily and deadly fact of life for the mass of the black population in capitalist America. A white cop pulled over 50-year-old Walter Scott on April 4, supposedly for driving with a faulty taillight. When Scott makes a break for it, Officer Michael Slager squeezes off eight shots in rapid succession. Hit five times from behind, Scott crumples to the ground, where he is handcuffed and left to die. Slager then plants his taser next to the body. A black cop, Clarence Habersham, arrives moments later and does nothing to save Scott's life.

Walter Scott's brother Rodney, a member of International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, referred to Slager "using my brother for target practice." This coldblooded execution, evocative of an overseer gunning down a runaway slave, is just one of many in the past year to have touched a raw nerve with black people across the country. Another is the gruesome killing of Freddie Gray, whose voice box was crushed and spinal cord almost completely severed by Baltimore police. As enforcers of a system

Facebook [inset], Zoeller/Post and Courier

Inset: Walter Scott. Right: Protest against police violence at North Charleston City Hall, April 8.

rooted in ruthless exploitation and racial oppression, cops harass, brutalize and kill black and Latino people without stop and attack striking workers when they set up effective picket lines.

Hundreds of mourners attended Walter Scott's funeral on April 11, and the NAACP and Black Lives Matter among others have held a series of rallies, vigils and meetings. In addition to Rodney, other relatives of Walter Scott are also members of ILA Local 1422, as are relatives of Denzel Curnell and Asberry Wylder, previous victims of trigger-happy Charleston-area cops. Local 1422 (whose membership is made up of black workers) has made its union hall available as an organizing center for protest, but to date has given no indication that it will call out its members.

In response to the killings of Scott and Gray, and the long roster of others whose lives have been snuffed out by the police, a clarion call for massive labor-centered protest should ring out. What is necessary is for the social power of the working class to be mobilized independently of the capitalist class enemy and its political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties. If, say, Local 1422 were to place itself at the front of protest against police terror, it would draw in other unions and

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Charleston...

(continued from page 1)

demonstrate the kind of muscle that could put the cops on notice. And in mobilizing under their own banners, workers could get a sense of their social power and gain confidence for the battles to come. Such an action would also drive home to workers everywhere that they have a vital interest in the fight against black oppression.

Longshoremen are in a position to show the way. The ILA in the "right to work" South is a bulwark of labor/black power, with an ability to cut off the flow of goods (and therefore profits) and a real authority in the broader black community. Today, any ILA action would resonate far beyond the waterfront. In a state where unionization is at rock bottom and poverty is rife, Local 1422 has admirably taken up important causes over the years. It has supplied its hall as a base, and its members as volunteers, for numerous union organizing efforts, including sanitation workers and port truckers, and other crucial struggles such as for immigrant rights.

But at the same time, the Local 1422 leadership has shied away from militant mobilizations of the union in its own name, not wanting to alienate false "friend of labor" Democrats, who no less than the Republicans build up the police and their repressive powers. In this vein, Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley pledged in an April 9 statement on the killing of Walter Scott that the union "will continue to work with community leaders and lawmakers throughout the State of South Carolina to prevent these types of tragedies from ever happening again."

In response to an appeal from Local 1422 for solidarity from its allies in the workers movement, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in the Bay Area has announced it will stop work at the Port of Oakland on May Day to protest against the killer cops and will march to City Hall. This planned shutdown points to the kind of working-class action that is needed. But an independent demonstration of union power would have to be counterposed to support for Democrats and liberal police reform schemes. However, that is not the policy of the ILWU officialdom.

WV Photo

Smith/Post and Courier

June 2001: Longshoremen march (above) in Columbia, South Carolina, in defense of Charleston Five, arrested during January 2000 cop attack on ILA picket (right).

A similar Local 10 work stoppage was held in October 2010 to demand "justice for Oscar Grant," who was shot dead by a BART transit cop on New Year's Day 2009 in Oakland. At the rally associated with the port shutdown, left-talking union bureaucrats channeled anger over Grant's killing into appeals for the capitalist state to "jail the killer cops." Such demands lull the working class and black people into believing the illusion that the courts of the class enemy will punish its armed thugs.

Truth is, under capitalism, the role of the courts and prosecutors is to lock up the many victims of the marauding cops, not the other way around. According to an analysis by the *Washington Post* (April 11), among the thousands of fatal shootings at the hands of police since 2005, only 54 officers were ever charged, with most of those later cleared or acquitted. No South Carolina cop has been convicted in the last five years. On the rare occasion an officer is found guilty, he almost always gets just a slap on the wrist, like Oscar Grant's killer.

The reason is that the cops are the guard dogs of capitalist rule. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin put it: "Forming a professional caste of men trained in the practice of violence upon the poor, men who receive somewhat higher pay and the privileges that go with authority (to say nothing of 'gratuities'), the police everywhere, in every republic, however democratic, where the bourgeoisie is in power, always remains the unfailing weapon, the chief support and protection of the bourgeoisie."

At first, city and state officials all rushed to defend the North Charleston killer cop, who had shared a laugh over his "pumping" adrenaline with a senior officer as Scott bled out. But the video, recorded and given to the Scott family by witness Feidin Santana, caught out the cops in their lies, showing the taser being planted (and CPR not being administered). If this thug in blue had simply blown away his victim, he undoubtedly would still be in uniform, video or no. In response to the ensuing uproar, bourgeois politicians, Republican and Democrat alike, scrambled to shore up public trust in the forces of "law and order" by issuing empty condemnations of Slager. The filing of murder charges against Slager was intended to put matters to rest so the police could better go about their business.

As usual when the image of the police is in need of some repair, black preachers and Democratic Party hucksters like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson (who delivered a speech to a sizable crowd at the Local 1422 hall) showed up to push the lie that the racist killers can be transformed into something more benign. Things would be different, it is claimed, if there were more black cops in North Charleston, or if the Feds came in to clean up the racist police. More body cameras and national legislation on policing standards, we are told, would improve accountability. This is a lie: the cops will never be "accountable to the community."

These so-called reforms would change nothing fundamental. Black cops (like Habersham) do the same job as their white counterparts. The federal government isn't going to help—it oversees the whole plantation of racist American capitalism. Needless to say, cop abuse of the black masses remains pervasive where the Justice Department has intervened into municipal police departments, such as in Los Angeles and Cleveland. And the Obama administration gave a free pass to the killers of both Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. As for video, its proliferation in recent years has not slowed cop marauding in the slightest. Racist police brutality will not end short of the overthrow of the very capitalist system that cops "serve and protect."

Labor Rights and Black Rights Go Hand in Hand

The cops run roughshod over the vast numbers of black people condemned to poverty and misery by a system that has no jobs to provide them. Many are swept up in the racist "war on drugs," and more and more have fallen prey to the revived practice of imprisoning debtors, including Walter Scott who was ensnared in a cycle of unpaid child support, stints in jail and lost jobs. But the fundamental purpose of the machinery of state repression—the cops, the courts, the prisons—is to suppress the one force in this society that does have the social power, based on its role in production, to prevail against racist American capitalism: the multiracial working class.

ILA Local 1422 itself is no stranger to organized state violence. When picketing in January 2000 to stop a non-union operator from working a ship, unionists were met by an army of 600 municipal, county and state police clad in riot gear and backed with armored vehicles and helicopters. Firing tear gas, shock grenades and pellet bags, the cops waded into the union picket swinging long wooden clubs. The furious assault came only days after a Local 1422 contingent had participated in a 50,000-strong protest against the Confederate flag being flown atop the state capitol in Columbia.

Local 1422 backed down the union-busters, who returned the jobs to the ILA. The defiant stand of ILA members, a taste of the hard-fought class struggle by which the labor movement has won its major gains, inspired broad layers of the working class in South Carolina and beyond. The Charleston Five, arrested for defending their union that day, were saved from years in prison through a campaign of international labor solidarity.

There is an inseparable connection between the fight for the rights of labor and of black people. Today, the need for the revitalization of the labor movement is sharply posed. A key task is organizing

May Day Greetings!

TROTSKY

LENIN

Jamaican-born black poet Claude McKay was part of a wave of radicals who, inspired by the Russian working class' conquest of power through the 1917 October Revolution, were recruited to Communism. He traveled to Soviet Russia in 1922 where he served as a special delegate at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. The last poem that he wrote in Russia, excerpted below, hailed the Soviet workers' May Day celebration and was published in a monthly journal of the Communist Party of America.

The Nevsky glows ablaze with regal red,
Symbolic of the triumph and the rule
Of the new Power lifting high its head
Above the place where once a
  sceptered fool
Was mounted by the plunderers of men
To awe the plundered while they
  schemed and robbed.
The marchers shout again, again, again!
The stones where once the hearts of
  martyrs sobbed
Their blood are sweet unto their feet today
In celebration of the First of May.
[...]
Jerusalem is fading from men's mind,
And Christmas from its universal thrall
Shall free the changing spirit of mankind:
The First of May the holy day for all!
And Petrograd, the proud,
  triumphant, city,
The gateway to the new awakening East—
Where warrior-workers wrestled
  without pity—
Against the powers of magnate,
  monarch, priest!
World Fort of Struggle! each day's a
  First of May
To learn of thee to strive for Labor's Day.

—Claude McKay, "Petrograd: May Day, 1923," *Liberator* (August 1923)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Alabama magazine

Communist-led sit-down strike by steel workers at American Casting Company in Birmingham, Alabama, won union recognition in 1937.

British Elections:
No Choice for Workers, Minorities

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 230 (Spring 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. The British general election is scheduled for May 7.*

In the eyes of the state, Malcolm Burge's life was worth £809.79 [$1,206] net. That was the amount in "overpaid" benefits that Newham council [in East London] demanded from him after they slashed his housing benefits by half, driving the penniless 66-year-old retired gardener to

light a match to a can of petrol and burn himself to death last June. In November, 39-year-old Julia Kelly of Northampton, who suffered severe chronic back pain, was hounded to suicide when the Department of Work and Pensions insisted she pay back £4000 in disability payments that were retroactively denied her.

Day in and day out, countless lives are snuffed out or devastated in a less newsworthy manner. One "revelation" of official state cruelty follows another. Job centre staff are threatened with "performance reviews" if they do not meet their target of punitive measures, depriving the most desperate and downtrodden of benefits for weeks or months at a time for as little as being a few minutes late to job centres (that have no jobs). The number of such sanctions imposed annually soared after the global recession started to bite, climbing to more than 900,000 last year. In direct proportion, the number of emergency parcels handed out by food banks likewise soared above 900,000 in the year up to April 2014, almost triple the figure a year before.

Does anyone truly believe that the dystopia that is capitalist Britain today will be significantly bettered by whoever steps into No 10 Downing Street [the prime minister's residence] in May? The choices on offer come down to which party is the least distrusted and despised. David Cameron's Tories [the Conservative Party] revel in being "red in tooth and claw" in grinding the victims of unbridled capitalist greed. [Labour Party leader] Ed Miliband's shadow work and pensions secretary, Rachel Reeves, has declared that Labour in office will be "tougher" than the Tories in slashing benefits (*Guardian*, 12 October 2013). The Liberal Democrats lost whatever shred of credibility they had by entering into Cameron's government and promptly reneging on their pledge to oppose any tuition fee increases, further burdening those who manage to make it to university with a lifetime of debt. And all three parties vie to keep up with the in-your-face racists of Nigel Farage's UK Independence Party (UKIP) in bashing immigrants and Muslims.

Workers Hammer

London, 21 March: Trade-union contingents at demonstration against racism and fascism.

Farage's vile denunciation of British Muslims, referring to them as a "fifth column," only gave voice to the policies the Tories, and Labour before them, have actually implemented. It was Labour which joined the U.S.-led wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, and fanned murderous hatred of Muslims at home under the rubric of the "war on terror." It was Labour's privatisation schemes (including of chunks of the NHS [National Health Service]) which led to the situation where billions have been shovelled to a handful of capitalists at the expense of working people and the poor. Tories and Labour together have presided over an ever more oppressive state in which the chasm between filthy rich and desperately poor has widened continuously.

Not surprisingly, as elsewhere in recession- and austerity-ridden Europe, more marginal parties are coming to the fore. On the right, UKIP is leeching votes from not only prospective Tory but also many Labour voters who buy into the lie that immigrants are to blame for the impoverishment of Britain's working people. On the other side are the Scottish Nationalists (SNP) and the Greens, bourgeois parties that have adopted a populist posture to position themselves to the left of Labour as it has moved to the right. Posing as opponents of austerity, friends of working people and champions of all good things, the environmentalist Green Party are gaining support, crucially including from elements of the trade-union bureaucracy.

The SNP are tapping into just hatred of Westminster rule and austerity policies, the better to win voters to their own version of capitalist oppression. Decades ago, Scots who despised the SNP's fundamental conservatism dubbed them "Tartan Tories"—a term dating to 1979, when SNP MPs [Members of Parliament] formed a bloc with Thatcher to bring down the Callaghan Labour government. The SNP have since retooled, winning votes on the basis of administering a gentler, more humane capitalism, e.g., keeping universities in Scotland free (for Scots and non-UK EU [European Union] citizens!). They remain loyal to the monarchy and pledge that an independent Scotland will remain in the EU and NATO.

As Marxists we oppose the monarchy, the House of Lords and indeed the whole entity known as the "United Kingdom," of which the Westminster parliament is the linchpin. The City of London [financial center] and its Home Counties environs are the core of British capitalism and lord it over other regions of England as well as over Scotland and Wales. We uphold the right of self-determination for the Scottish people. We advocated neither a yes nor a no vote in last September's referendum and, while opposing all forms of English chauvinism, we warned against illusions in Scottish nationalism.

Some six months after losing the referendum on independence, the Scottish Nationalists look set to sweep much of Scotland, continuing Scottish Labour's meltdown. The SNP's popularity has set off such English-chauvinist hysteria that one might be forgiven for thinking that the tame Scottish nationalists are about to re-enact the Jacobite rising of 1745. Cameron, echoed by voices within Labour itself, has called on Miliband to rule out a future Labour/SNP coalition government, howling: "You cannot let the people who want to break up our country into the government of our country." Miliband, who is never found wanting when his UK loyalism is questioned, shot back: "There will be no SNP ministers in any government I lead" (mirror.co.uk, 16 March). Another Tory, Lord Baker, has mooted a possible Tory/Labour coalition to keep out the SNP.

Whatever the differences between Tories and Labour—and people may be forgiven for finding them hard to detect these days—and however unpredictable the outcome of the upcoming election, one thing is certain. This election offers nothing for working people but the prospect of more capitalist oppression, racism and war. What we need is nowhere on offer but must be built: a revolutionary party of the working class committed to fighting for the interests of all the exploited and oppressed against capitalism and its attendant miseries.

The Strange Death of "Old" Labour

The SNP is expected to win a significant number of seats at the expense of Labour, which grew toxic in many parts of Scotland for spearheading the crusade for a "no" vote in the referendum. A commentator in the *London Review of Books* (9 October 2014) described the scene when 60 Labour MPs arrived in Glasgow and were "chased through the streets by a guy in a rickshaw who was playing the *Star Wars* theme and hollering through a megaphone: 'Welcome, imperial masters! Welcome to Scotland, imperial masters! People of Glasgow, here are your imperial masters!' As one blogger said, that was surely the moment Labour in Scotland died."

Labour's decline in Scotland reflects broader changes that have taken place throughout Britain over the years. In an insightful piece titled "Labour Vanishes" (*London Review of Books*, 20 November 2014), Ross McKibbin observes:

> "Anyone wishing to chart the fragmentation of the party system and the origins of Labour's predicament could start in 1951. In that year's election 97 per cent of the electorate voted either Labour or Conservative: 49 per cent Labour and 48 per cent Conservative.... By 2010 only 65 per cent of voters—and, given the low turnout, only 42 per cent of the electorate—supported one or the other of the two major parties. Next year that figure may well be lower and the number of serious parties higher: five in England, four in Scotland (six if we include Ukip and the Greens), five in Wales if we include the Greens, five in Northern Ireland excluding various independents....
>
> "In 1951 about 70 per cent of voters were in or from the manual working class. Today the figure is less than 40 per cent. For Labour, these figures are dire. Not all manual workers voted Labour in 1951, but the majority did, and they had no doubt that Labour was the party of the working man and woman (though more

continued on page 10

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the "open shop" bastion that is the South, where much of the country's industry has shifted. This task is impossible without taking head-on the race-color caste oppression of black people that is a bedrock of the capitalist order in this country. Racism has proved invaluable to the capitalist rulers in dividing workers and weakening their struggles against the bosses.

ILA Local 1422 and South Carolina AFL-CIO officials are assisting the campaign by the IAM machinists union to organize the Boeing manufacturing facility in North Charleston. To date, the IAM bureaucrats have pursued an entirely legalistic, and losing, strategy. In the face of a vicious anti-union campaign by the company and bourgeois politicians (chief among them the union-hating Republican governor Nikki Haley), the IAM recently postponed its representation vote. A show of labor power in defense of the black population against unbridled police violence would breathe new life into the stalled organizing drive. If the union movement signaled in action that it would wage a fight in the interests of workers and the oppressed, it would inspire black and white workers alike to support the union organizing drive.

Mass pickets, occupations and solidarity strikes were the tools of the workers who built the CIO industrial unions in the 1930s, not just in the North. In fact, one of the most effective sit-down strikes of the period took place in Birmingham, Alabama. On Christmas Eve in 1936, black steel workers, led by two members of the Communist Party, struck the American Casting Company. The victory was a springboard to the CIO-affiliated Steel Workers Organizing Committee obtaining exclusive bargaining rights in the city's steel industry five years later, even as the Birmingham police chief vowed to quash all strikes. The broader fight to organize the South was shipwrecked by the trade-union bureaucracy's alliance with the Democrats, which in the South meant the racist Dixiecrats.

What the labor movement needs is a new, class-struggle leadership. Those sitting atop today's unions are prostrate before the capitalist rulers. Their treachery to the working class is perhaps nowhere more evident than when they embrace cops, prison guards and other armed security forces as "union brothers." These enemies of workers and black people are professional strikebreakers and the whip hand of the bosses. They have no place in the workers movement. Tellingly, the Fraternal Order of Police in the Charleston area vituperated against "professional race agitators" after the shooting of Walter Scott, and its Baltimore branch, fully backing the killers of Freddie Gray, denounced protesters as "a lynch mob."

A genuine fight against police terror can only proceed from a standpoint of implacable opposition to the capitalists, their state and political parties. It must also entail an unwavering commitment to the fight against all aspects of black oppression, attacks on immigrants and every other manifestation of the tyranny and barbarity of this capitalist profit system. To lead this struggle requires the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Such a party would mobilize labor/black power in the workplace and on the streets not just against the latest outrage of capitalism but with the aim of putting an end to the reign of the capitalist exploiters. Socialist revolution will sweep aside the machinery of capitalist state terror and install in its place a workers government where those who labor rule, opening the road to freedom for all.■

Vietnam 40 Years Ago:
U.S. Imperialism Defeated, Capitalist Rule Smashed

AFP

Bettmann

Vietnam was a victory! Left: North Vietnamese tank drives through main gate of presidential palace in Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, 30 April 1975. Right: A day earlier, CIA evacuation of U.S. mass murderers' South Vietnamese collaborators from Saigon.

April 30 was the 40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, marking the defeat of U.S. imperialism and its South Vietnamese puppet forces. The heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants fought not just for national liberation but also for social revolution. Soon after, Pathet Lao guerrilla insurgents in Laos gained state power as well, establishing a regime there based on proletarian property forms in conjunction with Vietnam, its more advanced neighbor. These social overturns in the former French colony of Indochina humiliated the American imperialists and were a victory for the exploited and oppressed around the world.

The brutal, decades-long war in Vietnam led to massive discontent and protest in the U.S. and radicalized a whole generation of youth. Self-described socialists and ex-radicals nostalgic for the massive demonstrations of the Vietnam War era peddle the myth that the antiwar movement ended the war. But it was the tenacity of the Vietnamese fighters on the battlefield that broke the imperialists' will and drove them out of the country.

It remains the duty of revolutionaries to unconditionally defend Vietnam, Laos and the other deformed workers states—China, Cuba and North Korea—against imperialist attack and domestic counterrevolution. The main target of U.S. imperialism in the region is China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown.

The Stalinist nationalist regime in Vietnam has in recent years criminally lined up with the U.S. imperialists' campaign to encircle China. This diplomatic rapprochement with the U.S. reflects Vietnam's isolation following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, as well as the continuing pressures of poverty and the historic mutual animosity between Vietnam and its larger and stronger Chinese neighbor. The Trotskyist program of proletarian political revolution—the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies and the establishment of governments based on workers, peasants and soldiers councils—is linked to the strategy of socialist revolutions worldwide, not least in the U.S., to put an end to the imperialist order.

We reprint below an article published in *WV* No. 68 (9 May 1975) headlined "Take Vientiane—For Political Revolution in Hanoi, Saigon, Phnom Penh—All Indochina Must Go Communist! Capitalist Class Rule Smashed in Vietnam, Cambodia!" The article reflects our initial characterization that Cambodia was also a deformed workers state. However, we later noted that Cambodia under the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, which decimated the tiny proletariat and depopulated whole cities, was "a barbaric nightmare which was not even a hideously deformed version of a workers state" ("U.S., China Arm Pol Pot Butchers," *WV* No. 493, 12 January 1990).

* * *

MAY 4—On April 30 the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) rode triumphantly into Saigon as leaders of the defeated puppet regime and the South Vietnamese bourgeoisie fled the country by every available means. The military victory of the DRV/NLF marks the end of 30 years of civil war against colonialism and imperialism and their local allies. It means the overthrow of capitalist rule in South Vietnam, a historic conquest for the working people of the entire world and one which must be unconditionally defended by class-conscious workers against imperialist attack.

We hail this stunning defeat of U.S. imperialism, the first in a major war during this century, and greet the victory of our class brothers and sisters in Indochina with internationalist proletarian solidarity. The struggle against the imperialists' Vietnam war has also been a major task of socialists in the imperialist centers, dominating the political experience of a whole generation of young aspiring revolutionaries. And it is as fellow combatants in the international class struggle that we warn the Indochinese masses that they must place no confidence in their Stalinist leaders.

Bettmann

September 1965: U.S. Marine terrorizes Vietnamese villagers rounded up as suspected Communist sympathizers.

The victory in Vietnam, like that in Cambodia two weeks earlier when the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh, belongs to the heroic worker and peasant fighters in Indochina who have struggled resourcefully and tenaciously for decades in order to break the grip of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation on the peninsula. But while a victorious social revolution has occurred, the struggle to establish revolutionary and internationalist workers states in the region is far from over. A phantom coalition with venal rightist generals and a playboy "neutralist" continues to "rule" in Vientiane [the capital of Laos], although it is clear to all that it could be quickly eliminated by a resolute offensive of the Pathet Lao.

Meanwhile, in Cambodia and Vietnam (both North and South) political power is not in the hands of the working masses, expressed by democratic rule through Soviets (workers councils) as was achieved by the Russian Revolution of 1917. Nor is there in Indochina today a Bolshevik party which could lead the revolutionary struggle forward by extending it internationally to the centers of world capitalism. The new Stalinist rulers in Phnom Penh and Saigon are as committed to the treacherous policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism as those in Moscow and Peking, or Hanoi and Havana.

Instead, what has been created in South Vietnam and Cambodia are ***deformed workers states***, qualitatively equivalent to the degenerated workers state which emerged in Russia with the consolidation of the Stalin-led bureaucracy. The ruling bureaucracies of the deformed workers states are narrowly nationalist in outlook, attempting to balance precariously between imperialism and the working class. Based on the property forms of a workers state, they occasionally put up a limited and distorted defense of the social conquests achieved by the overthrow of capitalism in order to preserve their own privileged position.

But because their rule is based on the political expropriation of the working class, these petty-bourgeois bureaucratic castes are incapable of mobilizing the pro-

letarian masses for an international revolutionary assault on the bastions of world capitalism, since it would simultaneously mean their own demise. The Stalinist rulers in Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh must be overthrown by a workers' political revolution led by a Trotskyist party in order to establish the organs of proletarian democracy and open the road to socialism. All Indochina Must Go Communist!

Military Victory and Social Revolution

The cost of these momentous victories in terms of human suffering by the toilers of Vietnam has been tremendous. The barbarous policies of the cynical mass murderers of U.S. imperialism and French colonialism—the "free fire zones" subjected to saturation bombing by B-52's, the "pacification programs" consisting of the assassination of all political opponents of the puppet regimes, the "strategic hamlets" which sought to eliminate the insurgents' popular support by locking up peasants in concentration camps—have produced millions of dead and maimed.

But still the Indochinese workers and peasants fought on, driven by a burning desire not only to be rid of the pimps and butchers who sat in air-conditioned offices in Saigon, but also to remove the daily oppression inexorably caused by capitalist exploitation. At a tremendous disadvantage in terms of firepower and sophisticated weaponry—the result of the refusal of the USSR and China to deliver adequate military supplies—they were able to militarily defeat the cream of the French army, the largest U.S. expeditionary forces since World War II (over 500,000 American military personnel in Vietnam at one point), and the most mechanized army in Asia.

However, the program of the bureaucracies in Hanoi, Peking and Moscow who led, controlled and supplied the insurgents was not to carry out a social revolution through defeating the bourgeoisie. Justifying their appetites for class collaboration by the Stalinist schema of "two-stage revolution," they sought to achieve "democratic" (i.e., bourgeois) governments of national reconciliation of all classes save the imperialists and their most direct lackeys. This was expressed in programs (such as those of the South Vietnamese NLF and Cambodian FUNK) which called for popular-front coalition governments with the bourgeoisie, omitting demands for agrarian revolution and guaranteeing the "right" of capitalists to continue to exploit their wage slaves; and in repeated sellouts at the bargaining table (especially 1945 and 1954).

But while the Stalinist leaders remained committed to a strategy of betrayal and class collaboration, they were also confronted with fundamental historical and social realities. The extreme weakness of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie which prevented it from rebelling against French colonial and U.S. imperialist domination made that coterie of drug traffickers, rice merchants, rack-renting landlords, corrupt military mercenaries, textile sweatshop bosses, rubber plantation managers and Honda salesmen doubly afraid of any mobilization of the exploited masses. Although the NLF and FUNK continued to call for the formation of coalition governments until scant hours before they marched into their respective capitals, the fabled anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie never materialized. To the lasting benefit of the Indochinese laboring masses, the Paris "peace" accords were never implemented.

Though DRV/NLF military forces fought well and defeated the puppet troops in the only two real battles of the last six weeks (Ban Me Thuot and Xuan Loc), the fall of Saigon came not as a result of a successful insurgent offensive, properly speaking, but because of the complete collapse of the Thieu regime and army. A single defeat in the Central Highlands produced a panicked retreat that put DRV/NLF forces within 50 miles of the capital in two weeks, practically without firing a shot.

The scenes of this jumbled collapse dominated the news from Vietnam during the last days of the puppet government. The wild looting and chaotic terror unleashed in Da Nang by drunken bands of ARVN [South Vietnamese army] soldiers was succeeded by the desperate clawing of Saigon merchants and collaborators to get into the U.S. embassy and join the select circle of those who would get a ticket to America from President Ford. While Thieu and Lon Nol sent off a final shipment of $16 million in gold bullion to Switzerland, well-connected prostitutes and wives of military officers began arriving in Guam by the plane-load. The predominance of air force families among the early passengers was explained by a threat from Saigon fighter pilots to shoot down the C-130s if their relatives were not included.

Subsequent news reports are extremely sketchy. Some reports quoted official broadcasts from Saigon as "announcing the nationalization of banks and virtually all other business and industrial enterprises" (*New York Times*, 2 May); administrative authority was reportedly being exercised by the Saigon-Gia Dinh Military Management Committee. In any case, it is clear that the ignominious collapse of the U.S.' puppet government, was accompanied by the flight of the bulk of the devastated bourgeoisie. The fall of Saigon was the fall of Vietnamese capitalism as a political force.

WV Photo

Spartacist banner at 1973 anti-Vietnam War protest in Washington, D.C.

45 Years of Struggle Against Imperialism

The struggle of the Indochinese masses against colonial oppression and the yoke of capitalist exploitation goes back well past the end of World War II. The Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) was formed in 1930 and led an important peasant revolt in central Vietnam during the same year. During the late 1930's, however, the Stalinist ICP faced considerable competition from two Trotskyist groups, particularly in southern Vietnam. One, the International Communist League (ICL) led by Ho Huu Tuong, was founded in 1931, while the second, larger, group around Ta Thu Thau was in a common front with the southern Stalinists from 1933 to 1937. As the ICP was obliged by Kremlin dictates and its program of class collaboration to give support to French colonialism during the period of the popular-front government in Paris, the Trotskyists were able to greatly expand their influence. In 1939 Thau's group swamped the Stalinists in colonial elections, winning 80 percent of the votes, as the masses decisively rejected Ho Chi Minh's support for "progressive" colonialism.

In August 1945 the Stalinists (now known as the Viet Minh) moved together with bourgeois nationalists to take over the French-Japanese colonial government apparatus as the Japanese surrender was announced. However, when British troops entered Saigon they were greeted by the Viet Minh, in line with Stalin's policy of alliance with the Western "democratic" imperialists during World War II. In contrast, the Trotskyist ICL called for opposition to the imperialists, agrarian revolution, expropriation of the bourgeoisie and a workers and peasants government.

The ICL's call did not remain simply on paper, but found a mass response as scores of "people's committees" were formed in the Saigon area, the dominant influence in them being that of the Trotskyists. Although the Stalinist police succeeded in arresting and shooting most of the leaders, a working-class uprising broke out a few days later in response to British-French moves to take power from the popular-front "government." While the Viet Minh negotiated, to no avail, the Trotskyist-led resistance went down fighting.

The Trotskyists had also been active in the north, but there the domination of the Viet Minh was unchallenged. As Ho was preparing to sign an agreement permitting the reintroduction of French troops in early 1946, the witchhunt against Trotskyists was intensified. Ta Thu Thau was murdered on orders from Stalinist leaders at that time, as were virtually all remaining Trotskyist cadre. Thus, if since 1946 the Stalinist leaders have been dominant in Vietnam, it is not because of a revolutionary line but rather because of the efficiency of their assassination squads.

After the reintroduction of colonial troops (with the assent of Ho Chi Minh), the Stalinists were forced to abandon the cities and retreat into guerrilla warfare. However, by 1954 they had been able to inflict a military defeat on the French army, not only in the north but throughout Indochina. While Russian and Chinese pressure was instrumental in inducing the Viet Minh negotiators at Geneva to abandon everything below the 17th parallel (as well as Laos and Cambodia), decisive victory was within reach. Thus Ho's agreement to the Geneva deal was another sharp blow against the struggle of the Indochinese masses.

With the change in the imperialist paymasters from Paris to more affluent Washington the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem was able to partially stabilize South Vietnam for a couple of years through the use of ruthless terror. Peasants were driven off their land, suspected Communists were "tried" by special tribunals and murdered by the hundreds. Sporadic resistance sprang up, often led by underground former Viet Minh cadre who had stayed behind. But not until 1960 when the National Liberation Front was formed did Hanoi give any appreciable aid to the southern rebels. Ho's concern was above all to scrupulously respect the terms of the Geneva sellout, vainly hoping that the butcher Diem would allow "free elections"!

The subsequent intervention of large numbers of U.S. troops represented a major setback for the NLF and DRV. But with the massacre of several hundred thousand workers and peasants in Indonesia, accomplishing an important objective of imperialism in the area, and given the absence of any prospect of victory for the Saigon regime, and the active hostility to U.S. intervention among large sections of American youth and increasingly in the working class, the basis was laid for the development of widespread bourgeois defeatism. This was not confined to peace demonstrations or McCarthy/McGovern left liberals, but became the dominant position of decisive sections of the ruling class. As economic problems multiplied and the U.S.' inability to continue playing the role of hegemonic world policeman became clearer, the Nixon regime moved toward negotiations finally resulting in the so-called Paris "peace" accords of 1973.

These accords did not lead to peace in Vietnam, and represented the extortion of concessions by the imperialists in return for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. While declaring "No Support to the Robbers' Peace!" the Spartacist League also recognized an important difference from the 1954 sellout, the "ceasefire in-place," i.e., the continued presence of large numbers of DRV/NLF troops in the south. We judged that the ceasefire "could well eventually lead to a Viet Cong victory in the South," but pointed out that this was a gamble and did not represent a change in the Stalinists' strategy of betrayal. When the NLF victory finally came, two years later, it was because of the military collapse of the puppet regime. Finding no substantial force with which to make a coalition government, the Stalinists finally were forced to take Saigon on their own.

Where Are the Two Stages?

Thus the history of the struggle in Vietnam, far from demonstrating the validity of Stalinist conceptions and "strategy" in fact reveals a series of attempts to sell out gains won on the battlefield in return for a compromise with imperialism. The recent events in Indochina fully confirm the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, which holds that in the backward countries even the democratic tasks of national emancipation and agrarian revolution can only be solved by the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasantry. The weak bourgeoisies of these areas, closely linked to domestic feudal reaction and imperialism, are incapable of carrying out a bourgeois revolution.

The Stalinists claim that their calls for coalition governments, popular fronts, a "bloc of four classes" and so on correspond to the first stage of "national-democratic," "popular-democratic," or "new democratic" revolution. Now they claim the victories in Vietnam and Cambodia as validation for their line. This is a fraud.

The NLF, for its part, was quite clear what it stood for. Wilfred Burchett, writing in the 2 April issue of the Maoist *Guardian*, reported an interview with PRG [Provisional Revolutionary Government] representatives in Paris: "Asked why the PRG did not aim at taking over completely in the South, in view of the wholesale collapse of Thieu's armed forces, Dinh Ba Thi said, 'We are for the strict implementation of the Paris Agreements which call for national reconciliation and coalition government'." He added only that Thieu must go.

Thieu went. "Big Minh" was brought to the presidential palace, but there was no coalition government. And official announcements by the PRG no longer mention the Paris peace agreement. Where, then, are the two stages?

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Upholding the Revolutionary Legacy

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929

A Review

V.K. Bulla

Communist Party of Great Britain

Left: Lenin addresses Petrograd demonstration commemorating heroes of world proletariat during Comintern Second Congress, July 1920. Right: Delegates to Second Congress, including John Reed, American author of *Ten Days That Shook the World* (standing second from right).

Jacob Zumoff's *The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929* examines the founding, development and degeneration of the Communist Party (CP) in the United States in the broader framework of the struggle for international proletarian revolution. Available in both paperback and hardcover, this fully indexed book, with extensive footnotes and references, will be of enduring value as a reference work for avowed socialists as well as scholars of communism. It is also a fun and interesting read and belongs in the toolkits of everyone seeking a coherent revolutionary program and lessons on building an organization capable of leading the working class in revolutionary struggle to sweep away capitalist imperialism.

The 1917 October Revolution in Russia, led by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, inspired millions worldwide by demonstrating for the first time that the working class could establish itself as the ruling class. The Bolshevik Revolution, occurring amid the imperialist slaughter of World War I, took the question of workers revolution out of the realm of Marxist theory and gave it flesh and blood. The Revolution was made *in* Russia but not *for* Russia alone; it was waged as the opening shot in the world socialist revolution.

The role of the Bolsheviks in leading the proletarian conquest of power gave great impetus to Lenin's fight for a communist Third International, which he had first called for in 1914. He had pronounced the social-democratic Second International dead after all its leading national sections supported the war aims of their "own" ruling class at the beginning of WWI. The Third (Communist) International, known as the Comintern, was founded in Moscow in 1919. The establishment of the Comintern was only the beginning of the fight to build revolutionary workers parties around the world. Forging new, Leninist vanguard parties internationally required a series of political fights to break the revolutionary elements completely from social-democratic program and practice.

How this struggle played out in the U.S. is thoroughly described in Zumoff's book, which focuses on the relationship between the American CP and the Comintern. The Communist movement in the U.S. was founded in 1919, a year that saw massive class struggles across the country and revolutionary struggles in Central Europe. The ranks of the American Socialist Party (SP) swelled and its pro-Bolshevik left wing grew. It was from splits from the SP's left wing that not one, but two Communist parties, both pledging allegiance to the Comintern, were formed in August/September 1919.

Just months after their formation, the two U.S. Communist groups were faced with massive government repression, dubbed the "Palmer Raids" after Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, which also targeted Socialists, anarchists and trade-union militants. Over 6,000 Communists were arrested in the first week of January 1920 and hundreds of foreign-born Communists were deported. In response to this repression, both groups went underground and many members of both CPs decided, invoking principle, to remain there.

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919–1929
by Jacob A. Zumoff
443 pp.
Paperback: Haymarket Books, 2015, $28.00
Hardcover: Brill, 2014, $167.00

The crucial and controversial thrust of Zumoff's account is his well-documented presentation of the *positive* role that the Comintern initially played in forging a Communist Party in the U.S. Zumoff analyzes in detail how interventions by the Comintern during Lenin and Trotsky's era, working with elements of the CP leadership, helped the nascent Communist Party grapple with American society. A key intervention of the Comintern was to support the unification of the two American parties and the establishment of a legal party, rejecting the ultraleft undergroundism. This struggle led to the establishment of the (legal) Workers Party in December 1921 and the definitive rejection of the fetish of undergroundism after debate at the Comintern's Fourth Congress in 1922.

Zumoff devotes two early chapters to the CP's work in the labor movement. The CP oriented toward the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), reflecting the Comintern's orientation to left-wing syndicalists internationally. While the CP was unable to recruit large numbers from the IWW, the few syndicalists who were won to Communism were crucially important. They enriched the American party with their experience of militant class struggle. The Comintern also pushed the CP to carry out work in the American Federation of Labor (AFL) despite its pro-capitalist leadership because it encompassed the majority of unionized workers.

Wayne State University

8 April 1926: Police in Passaic, New Jersey, attack workers, children during CP-led textile strike.

Today, we are in a deeply reactionary period shaped by the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. The general level of political consciousness has been thrown so far back that even those claiming to be socialists have for the most part abandoned any notion of a revolutionary transformation of society. In the 1920s, unlike today, there was a layer of a few tens of thousands of subjectively revolutionary workers and youth who looked to the living example of the Bolshevik Revolution. However, they needed to learn the program of Bolshevism. In the early years, the Comintern was a teacher and guide for the young American CP. The fights for political clarity that Zumoff describes are instructive, and many of the political issues which the CP had to learn to address still exist: racist oppression; divisions between U.S.-born and immigrant workers; broad attacks on the labor movement; illusions in left-talking capitalist third parties.

A Marxist Exploration of History

Zumoff's forthrightly Marxist exploration of early American Communism is a breath of fresh air. It has received reviews from diverse points on the political spectrum, creating a welcome forum for debate. In its final issue, the *New World Finn* noted Zumoff's recognition of the importance of the Finnish-American foreign language federation, the largest voting bloc in the early American CP. The Communist Party USA published a quite positive review on its website (peoplesworld.org, 26 January). The review's author did not however address Zumoff's analysis of the destructive Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern and the CP, of which today's reformist Communist Party is the product.

Despite the generally favorable tone of his review, Dan La Botz of the social-democratic Solidarity group disagrees with the entire point of the book, complaining that Zumoff "fails to address the central question, the Soviet domination of the Communist International, including its domination of the American Communists in the 1920s" (newpol.org, February 27). The notion there was ever any positive intervention from Moscow sticks in the craw of anti-communist social democrats like La Botz, who view Stalinism as having flowed inevitably from Leninism.

In his introduction, Zumoff writes, "The study of American Communism is at once the study of Communists and previous studies of American Communism." His book thus acknowledges and supplements Theodore Draper's excellent two volumes, *The Roots of American Communism* (1957) and *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960). Other key works acknowledged by Zumoff that

should be required reading for all interested in the early history of American Communism include the letters to Draper from James P. Cannon, a founding member of the Communist and Trotskyist movements in the United States, published as *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (1962); Bryan Palmer's biography, *James P. Cannon and the Origins of the American Revolutionary Left, 1890-1928* (2007); and the documentary volume of Cannon's writings, *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism—Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928* (1992), published by the Prometheus Research Library (PRL). Zumoff also cites useful articles by Michael Goldfield, the author of *Color of Politics* (1997), on the CP and black oppression.

The most crucial source materials used by Zumoff were in the Comintern's own archives in Moscow, which had been closed to historians until 1992. He also delved into other primary source materials that were not previously available, such as memoirs and FBI files. Zumoff additionally mined the archives of the PRL, of which he is an associate. The PRL is a working Marxist research library and the archives of the Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee. It is Zumoff's sympathy for the aims of the early CP that guides his use of previously neglected sources and his fresh interpretation of others, lending his work a richer color and texture than that of previous scholars.

Draper (a former writer for the CP's *Daily Worker* who became a liberal anti-Communist) argued that the American CP was dominated by Moscow and that this relationship prevented the party from becoming a viable American revolutionary organization. As he claimed in an exchange with his critics in the *New York Review of Books*, "the Soviets exercised their hegemony and the Americans experienced it" (15 August 1985).

New Left historians, propelled by the mass radicalization and social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, approached history "from the bottom up" and asserted against Draper that Moscow was not so significant and that the CP had sprouted from native soil. The New Left historians concentrated on the CP's more successful work in the mass black and union struggles of the 1930s (see, e.g., Mark Naison's *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* [1983]). By focusing narrowly on the 1930s, these historians obscure the fact that the CP's work in that decade was built upon foundations laid, with the involvement of the Comintern, in the 1920s.

Zumoff explains that both interpretations of Communist history imbibe the bourgeois ideology that any Soviet influence had to be bad:

> "Although there was no love lost between Draper and his critics, both *accepted* the same framework. The division between 'American' and 'foreign' in American Communism remained undisputed, with the Soviet/Comintern influence unquestionably negative....
>
> "The present work rejects this concept of Americanisation as counterposed to Comintern guidance. Leninism, as understood by the early Comintern, did not represent a set of formulae or dogmas, but rather the understanding of the need for a political struggle not only against the bourgeoisie but also the social-democratic leadership that had shown its bankruptcy through parliamentarianism and support to the slaughter of World War I."

Lenin and Trotsky realized that each country had its own history and conditions that required different revolutionary tactics. Recognizing that the founding cadres of the American CP were animated by the revolutionary internationalist vision of Lenin and Trotsky's Comintern, Zumoff assesses Comintern interventions and the work of the American CP on the basis of the validity or otherwise of what the Communists fought for, how they fought for it and what they learned from the experiences.

The purpose and methods of the Comintern's intervention in the American party changed as the Soviet workers state itself underwent a process of degeneration beginning in 1924. As Zumoff notes: "By the end of the decade, reflecting the political degeneration of the Russian Revolution under Stalin, the Comintern's interventions were more negative."

The Bolsheviks recognized that socialism, a society of material abundance based upon the highest level of productive technology and an international division of labor, required workers revolutions worldwide, especially in the advanced capitalist countries. The isolated workers state in backward Russia was plagued by economic scarcity and desperately needed proletarian rule to be extended to the West. With the defeat of revolutionary opportunities in Germany in 1918-19 and, critically, 1923, a conservative bureaucracy led by Stalin rose to political power beginning in 1924 amid a profound demoralization of the Soviet proletariat. The economic basis of the workers state (the collectivized property, the centrally planned economy and the monopoly of foreign trade) had not been overturned, but the proletariat was politically expropriated by a bureaucratic caste.

Promulgated by Stalin in late 1924, the dogma of "socialism in one country" became a justification for abandoning the revolutionary internationalist purpose of the October Revolution. Over the next several years, the Comintern (and its national sections) became subordinated to the foreign policy interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, ceasing to be the party of world revolution. Leon Trotsky doggedly fought the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Communist Party and the Comintern, while continuing to defend the Soviet workers state.

George Meany Archives

Cyril V. Briggs, founder of African Blood Brotherhood, from which the early CP recruited. ABB membership application (above) calls for "immediate protection and ultimate liberation of Negroes everywhere."

The bulk of the American Communist Party, feeling the pressure of an expanding and powerful U.S. imperialism, readily followed in the degenerating Comintern's wake. This was the "roaring twenties," a period of fabulous accumulation of wealth for the bourgeoisie, a lull in class struggle and a rise of racist state and Ku Klux Klan terror against black people and immigrants. As Cannon wrote to Theodore Draper about these years: "The party became receptive to the ideas of Stalinism, which were saturated with conservatism, because the party cadres themselves were unconsciously yielding to their own conservative environment" (*The First Ten Years of American Communism*).

One important aspect of the Stalinist degeneration of the American party that Zumoff deals with is the division of the party into rival factions lacking any fundamental political basis. By 1925, the political differences around which the groupings had initially formed became displaced by struggles for party control, obscuring political clarity. As he notes, "Leading bodies often passed important political motions unanimously, yet factionalism hardened."

A substantial section of one of these factions did acquire a revolutionary program. After becoming acquainted with some of Trotsky's central criticisms of Stalinism at the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, James P. Cannon was won to the program of Trotsky's Left Opposition. The Trotskyists were fighting to return the Soviet regime and the Comintern to revolutionary internationalism. For this opposition to Stalinism, Cannon and a core of his factional supporters were expelled from the CP in 1928 and formed the nucleus of the first American Trotskyist organization.

The Russian Revolution and the Fight for Black Freedom

Fully four chapters of the book are devoted to the Comintern's fight to force the American CP to address black oppression (then called the "Negro Question"), which now as then is integral to U.S. capitalism. The Bolsheviks had developed their party in intense opposition to the Great Russian chauvinism of the tsar's empire and they understood that the struggles against national and other forms of special (i.e., non-class) oppression could be a powerful lever to advance socialist revolution. This was a new revolutionary idea that changed how American communists thought about their work in a country founded on black chattel slavery.

As Cannon wrote in "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement" (1959): "The earlier socialist movement, out of which the Communist Party was formed, never recognized any need for a special program on the Negro question. It was considered purely and simply as an economic problem, part of the struggle between the workers and the capitalists; nothing could be done about the special problems of discrimination and inequality this side of socialism." He went on to note:

> "The American communists in the early days, under the influence and pressure of the Russians in the Comintern, were slowly and painfully learning to change their ***attitude;*** to assimilate the new theory of the Negro question as a ***special*** question of doubly-exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as part of the overall program—and to start doing something about it."

In describing this critical struggle, a frontal challenge to Jim Crow America, Zumoff highlights the stories of early black Communists, such as Caribbean immigrants Claude McKay and Otto Huiswoud as well as Lovett Fort-Whiteman, a former anarchist from Texas. He narrates the story of the important recruitment of cadre from the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), a Harlem-based organization of mainly Caribbean immigrants, including its founder, Cyril Valentine Briggs.

At the end of WWI, coinciding with the Russian Revolution, there was a burgeoning of black militancy and racial pride in the Northern ghettos. The "Great Migration" of black people from the rural Jim Crow South to the industrial cities of the North intersected the return of black veterans who thought their military service entitled them to some measure of equality. Organizations like the ABB championed the struggles of blacks in the U.S. and the colonial world and espoused black self-defense against racist terror.

Black revolutionaries joined the CP because of the appeal of the Russian Revolution and the authority of the Bolsheviks. As Zumoff puts it:

> "Indeed, the American Communists with their social-democratic colourblindness must not have appeared attractive; the Communist Party would have been unable to recruit the ABB on their own. Briggs and the ABB, like many throughout the colonial world, were attracted to the Communist International because of its anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, as well as Lenin's emphasis on fighting special oppression. Briggs and the other ABB recruits did not want to join the American CP per se, but saw themselves as enlisting in the American branch of international Communism."

In the 1920s, the vast majority of the trade unions organized by the AFL (with the significant exception of the United Mine Workers) were narrow craft unions and consciously racially exclusionist, essentially job trusts for skilled white workers. The "Wobblies" of the IWW had been an exception in their fight for industrial unions and their energetic organizing of black and white workers together. There were few black members of the Socialist Party, the most prominent of which was Hubert Harrison. Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs was anti-racist to his bones but the Socialist Party was a "broad church" that also encompassed stone-racist segregationists like Victor Berger. Even Debs said that socialists "have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races."

Recognition of the necessity for revolutionaries to combat the special oppression of black people was part of the Communists' struggle to fully break with the reformist political baggage of social democracy. It took a fight by Lenin at the Second Comintern Congress in 1920 to get the CP to begin to focus on the black question. Zumoff's book brings to light correspondence between Lenin and the American Communist John Reed. Lenin insisted that Reed give a report to the Second Congress on the nature of black oppression, despite Reed's protests that he would

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Book Launch and Discussion

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929

by Jacob A. Zumoff

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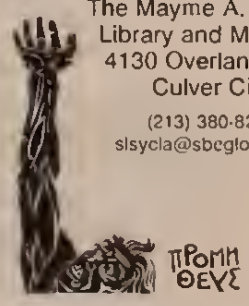

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Canada's Creeping Police State

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *No. 184 (Spring 2015), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

The [Conservative Stephen] Harper government's Bill C-51, the "Anti-Terrorism Act 2015," is a sweeping attack on free speech and other civil liberties. The bill targets publications, web postings and even private conversations sympathetic to causes that the capitalist rulers deem to be "terrorism." It authorizes the CSIS secret police to go after any activity that "undermines the sovereignty, security or territorial integrity of Canada" or interferes with the country's "economic or financial stability." And you don't have to actually *do* anything; the bill provides for "preventive detention" of individuals who the police claim "may commit" an offense.

The most immediate targets are Muslims, who are being subjected to a wave of demonization and discrimination from the federal government on down. Bill C-51's timing is no accident. A federal election is on the horizon, and with oil prices having collapsed and the overall economy going down with them, propaganda extolling "Canada's economic action plan" just won't cut it. The killing of two soldiers in Ottawa and Quebec by converts to Islam last October was a gift from the gods to the Tories [Conservative Party], for whom a campaign centred on the glorification of war and scare stories about Muslim "terrorists" could be a ticket to re-election.

"A great evil has been descending on our world," Harper intoned as he introduced the bill on January 30. The Tories are churning out propaganda linking Canada's role in the war against the Islamic fundamentalists of ISIS to a supposed threat of mass "jihadist terrorism" at home. They're also railing against a Federal Court ruling that upholds the right of a Muslim woman to take the citizenship oath while wearing the niqab (full-face veil). The anti-Muslim hysteria has had particular traction in Quebec, where municipal authorities have shut down and blocked the opening of mosques and a Montreal judge refused even to hear a court case brought by a Muslim woman unless she removed her headscarf.

As Marxists and fighters for women's liberation, we recognize that the Islamic headscarf is a symbol and instrument of women's oppression. However, that is far from the main issue here: the moves by governments and the courts to restrict the democratic rights of Muslims, including the right to wear the veil, are part of a crusade to whip up bigotry and hatred against a vulnerable minority.

The labour movement and all those who uphold democratic rights must defend Muslims against these attacks. But make no mistake: the Tories' proposed law targets huge swathes of the population. Native people engaged in road or rail blockades, Quebec nationalists who oppose Canada's "territorial integrity," left-wing activists, political refugees who support national liberation struggles abroad—all these and more are in the gunsights of this reactionary bill.

Canadian Press

Press Association

Cops menace June 2010 anti-G20 protest in Toronto. Right: Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper.

The bottom line of the capitalist social system is private profit, and there is no greater threat to profit than the people whose labour produces it. That's why the organized working class will be the ultimate target of the rulers' repressive legislation. The government already bans strikes with metronomic regularity, from the railways to the post office and more, claiming such moves are essential for Canada's economic well-being. Bill C-51 goes further: in outlawing any interference with "critical infrastructure" or "economic or financial stability," Harper's new legislation could make even *calling for* a strike illegal.

Imperialist Terror and Hypocrisy

The U.S. imperialists launched the "war on terror" in conjunction with their occupation of Afghanistan and later Iraq after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Other imperialist countries followed suit, including the then-Liberal government in Ottawa. From the start, we exposed this "war on terror" as a pretext to increase the police powers and repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, constricting the democratic rights of the population. As we wrote:

> "In 'normal' times, the class dictatorship of capital over labor, of wealth and privilege over the poor and oppressed, lies partly hidden in a wrapper of constitutions and rights, treaties and conventions, elections and parliamentary debate. But the 'war on terrorism' is lifting that cover, revealing the democratic imperialist state as nothing other than the bourgeoisie's repressive weapon against the working class....
>
> "And the definition of what constitutes 'terrorist activity' is vague enough to include 'disruptions' like the Quebec City anti-globalization protests, Native blockades in pursuit of land claims, or 'illegal' strikes like the citywide Days of Action in Ontario in the mid-1990s."
>
> —"For Class Struggle Against Canadian Imperialism!" *Spartacist Canada* No. 131, Winter 2001/2002

A decade and a half later, the racism and hypocrisy of the ruling class is even more brazen. After Islamists staged criminal attacks on a newspaper office and a kosher supermarket in France in January, capitalist politicians from across Europe and beyond linked arms in Paris in a grotesque display of "national unity," while Muslim and other minority youth were hit with heightened repression (see "France: Down With 'War on Terror' Repression!" [*WV* No. 1060, 23 January]). Yet four years ago when Norwegian fascist Anders Breivik massacred 77 people, mostly attendees at a social-democratic summer camp, the rulers orchestrated no such international outpouring.

Another example illustrating the self-serving hypocrisy of the capitalist rulers came when two youths—one of whom had a blog and social media postings replete with Nazi symbols—were arrested in Halifax in February for allegedly plotting a mass shooting and arson attack on a shopping mall. Justice minister Peter MacKay pointedly refused to call this terrorism because it was not "culturally motivated." For the government, the "terrorism" label is a political weapon aimed above all at scapegoating Muslims.

What capitalist governments deem to be "terrorism" is always determined by political purposes. In the 1980s, when Islamic reactionaries of the Taliban and Al Qaeda ilk were throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women in Afghanistan, the U.S. and Canadian rulers hailed them as "freedom fighters" against the Soviet Union and showered them with billions in aid. At the same time, the African National Congress, then fighting apartheid rule in South Africa, was officially declared a terrorist group.

Like Frankenstein's monster, the Islamists turned against their former masters. After the September 2001 attacks, U.S., Canadian and other imperialist forces bombed and tortured their way through Afghanistan, razing village after village. American forces similarly laid waste to Iraq. In 2011, NATO rained death on Libya, destroying that country and bringing to power rival cabals of Islamic fundamentalists.

The imperialist bombardment of ISIS is the latest episode in the wars and occupations that have wrecked much of the Near East and touched off escalating ethnic bloodletting. The world's toilers had no side in the reactionary, mainly Sunni-Shi'ite communal conflicts that have engulfed Iraq and Syria. It goes without saying that we communists are die-hard enemies of the ultra-reactionary social and political program of ISIS, and that we condemn all interethnic massacres. But ISIS is today under attack by U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of workers and the oppressed worldwide, and by Washington's junior partner in Ottawa. Under such circumstances, Marxists have a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and their on-the-ground lackeys including the Baghdad government, its Shi'ite militias and the Kurdish nationalist forces in Iraq and Syria.

Military setbacks for the U.S. and its allies might give the imperialist rulers pause in their military adventures, including by encouraging opposition at home. Such opposition can add to the tinder that must be ignited in class struggle against the exploiters who, in their quest for ever greater profits, beat down workers and the oppressed. In the course of such struggle, the working class must be won to the program of socialist revolution, aiming to destroy the imperialist beast from within.

Capitalist Justice = Organized Terror

As the Marxist militant Victor Serge explained in his 1926 book, *What Every Revolutionary Should Know About State Repression*:

> "It is too readily forgotten that apart from the revolutions necessary to give it birth, bourgeois society took *centuries of terror* to emerge and grow. Big capitalist property took shape over the centuries through the implacable eviction of the tillers of the soil; manufacturing and then industrial capital were accumulated by the implacable exploitation, aided by bloody legislation, of the dispossessed peasantry, reduced as they were to beggary."

"Justice," added Serge, "has been nothing but terror organised to the advantage of the possessing classes. To steal from a rich man has always been a greater crime than to kill a poor man."

For the capitalists, "democracy" serves as a velvet glove hiding the iron fist of a class dictatorship over the working class, minorities and the poor. The yawning abyss separating the tiny class that owns industry and the banks from the working people they exploit has been made even wider since the onset of the latest global economic crisis in 2008. Well aware that

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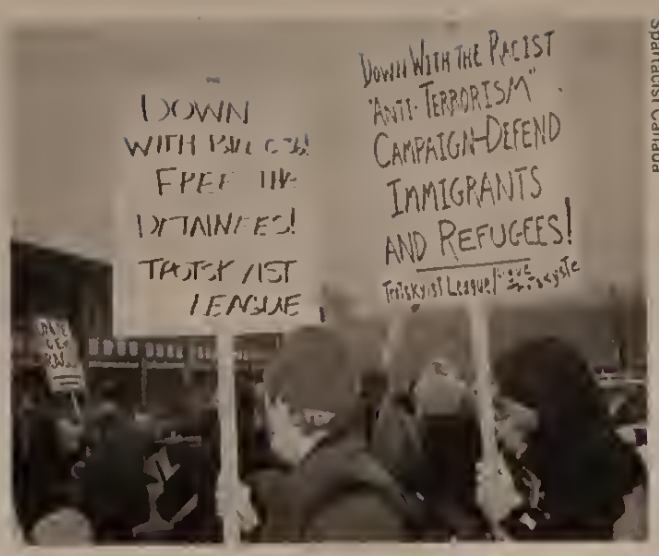
galloping inequality is increasing social tensions that can sow the seeds of class struggle, the rulers are eager to put in place a panoply of "anti-terror" measures and laws to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the state against workers and the oppressed. Ultimately, the only rights the capitalists are committed to maintaining are their rights to hold property and exploit labour. At the same time, what the government can get away with will ultimately be determined by class and other social struggle.

The goal of Marxists is the overthrow of capitalist class rule through the mobilization of a politically conscious working class. We thus oppose individual acts of terrorism, which cannot root out capitalist oppression and inevitably lead to greater repression. However, we draw a distinction between odious attacks on innocent civilians, as in Paris in January, and those that target the repressive forces of the state, such as the soldiers killed in Ottawa and St-Jean-sur-Richelieu. As we wrote last issue: "For Canadian armed forces personnel, the possibility of retaliation for military operations comes with the territory" ("U.S./Canada: Out of Iraq, Syria!" *Spartacist Canada* No. 183, Winter 2014/2015).

It is in the direct interest of the working class to fight against the wars, occupations and domestic repressive measures carried out in the name of combatting "terror." But this runs straight up against the class collaborationism of the trade-union bureaucracy and their political allies in the social-democratic NDP [New Democratic Party]. The labour tops have long embraced the "national interests" of Canadian capitalism, chaining workers to their own exploiters. If the unions are to be revived and transformed into bastions of the class struggle that is desperately needed, they must act in defense not only of themselves but of immigrants, other minorities and all those in the crosshairs of the state.



Spartacist Canada

Trotskyist League of Canada condemns racist "war on terror" at Toronto protest outside refugee detention center, February 2002.

After weeks of dithering, the New Democrats announced that they would oppose the Tories' Bill C-51. However, they accept the whole framework of the government's repressive "war on terror," and are quibbling over details. They complain that the bill "was not developed in consultation with other parties, all of whom recognize the real threat of terrorism and support effective, concrete measures to keep Canadians safe" (ndp.ca, 19 February). The NDP criticizes the government for not providing enough "counter-terrorism" funding for the cops as well as "counter-radicalization" programs in the community. In plain English, they want CSIS and the RCMP to have *more* resources to police dissent and to regiment the population.

Various reformist outfits claim the NDP can be pressured into becoming an instrument that acts in the interests of the working class. The Fightback group calls for an NDP government "on a socialist program" while Socialist Action (SA) wants to win the party to a "Workers' Agenda." Saluting NDP leader Tom Mulcair for "getting off the fence" and opposing Bill C-51, SA claims that "the task is for the NDP and its labour allies to win working class public opinion to oppose the terror law, and the corporate terrorists behind it" (socialistaction.ca, 4 March). Yes, if pigs had wings, they could fly. The idea that the NDP will mobilize the workers against "corporate terrorists" is just as likely. While the fake socialists nurture abject illusions in the New Democrats, even as the latter move ever rightward, authentic Marxists understand that struggle against the capitalist system requires breaking workers from the grip of pro-capitalist social democracy.

The Necessity of Revolutionary Leadership

The Harper Tories seek to regiment all aspects of social life. They want the population to venerate the military and the monarchy, to fear the "criminals" and "terrorists" who supposedly lurk around every corner, to extol a country that is, they claim, "glorious and free." But who should working people and the oppressed really be afraid of? The cops gun down black youth and other minorities all the time. Such police violence is part of the ongoing state terror against the oppressed that is integral to capitalist rule. Cuts to health care and pensions, crumbling infrastructure, work accidents due to the bosses' neglect of elementary safety measures—these too are far greater dangers than the actions of a few religious zealots who dream of a return to the 7th century.

By orders of magnitude, the biggest sources of terror in the world today are the imperialist rulers in Washington, Ottawa and elsewhere, who viciously exploit the workers at home while lording it over the subjugated masses of the semicolonial world. With its overwhelming numbers and strategic role in producing society's wealth, the working class has the historic task of leading a struggle against the all-sided attacks of the exploiters. The consciousness of the working class is today far removed from such a perspective, thanks in large part to the betrayals of the labour misleaders. But in the course of renewed social struggle, the workers and their allies among the oppressed can come to understand the need to uproot the entire social system that lies at the foundation of Canada's creeping police state.

The working people need a leadership that doesn't bow to the bosses' dictates and champions the cause of all the victims of capitalist barbarism. Only the victory of proletarian revolutions in Canada, the U.S. and around the world can end the wars and occupations, the exploitation and racist oppression of capitalist class rule and its barbaric state repression. The necessary instrument for such struggle is a reforged Fourth International, world party of the socialist revolution. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste dedicates all our activities to building the nucleus of such a party. When capitalism has been swept into history's dustbin, mankind will be able to develop a society based on abundance and equality, where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. ■

Vietnam...

(continued from page 5)

One group which believes there is some truth in the "two-stage" theory is the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. In a front-page National Committee statement in the *Militant* (9 May), the SWP hails "the victory of the Vietnamese rebels" and announces that "The objective conditions also exist for a social revolution to abolish the entire system of exploitation for private profit."

This last sentence evidently means the SWP believes that a capitalist state still exists in South Vietnam. Not only does this ignore the powerful social revolution which has taken place, and the fact that capitalist rule can only be restored by a violent counterrevolution, but it fundamentally revises the Leninist theory of the state. Presumably if it decides next week or next month that nationalizations reportedly carried out by the PRG include the key sectors of the economy, then the SWP will declare South Vietnam to be some kind of a workers state. (It holds that China did not become a deformed workers state until the major nationalizations were carried out at the time of the Korean war.) But this amounts to a "peaceful transition" to a workers state!

The expropriation of the decisive sectors of the economy is indeed a key element of a workers state. But the state is at bottom an armed body of men committed to defending certain property forms. Thus Russia became a workers state in 1917, when the Bolsheviks took power and established soviet rule. The nationalizations came later.

The situation is different when the leaders of the revolution are not a proletarian Marxist party but a Stalinist bureaucracy based on a peasant guerrilla army. Neither the peasantry as a class nor the Stalinists as a political force are committed to establishing a workers state. The NLF has stated as much, on many occasions, and given ample proof of its intentions. But having taken power alone, without an alliance with significant bourgeois forces, and faced with the massive exit of the South Vietnamese bourgeoisie, the Stalinists are forced to establish the property forms of a workers state in order to revive production and above all to defend their rule against imperialist attack.

Toward a Communist Indochina

The victory of the Cambodian and Vietnamese Stalinists and the overthrow of capitalist rule in those two countries have occurred under exceptional circumstances: extreme disorganization of the native bourgeoisie, economic and political difficulties of the imperialists which have prevented renewed U.S. intervention, and above all the absence of the working class organized to fight in its own interests.

The regime which they establish does not, and cannot, base itself on organs of proletarian democracy, but rather on the fiat of a bonapartist bureaucracy. The task of Marxists in Vietnam and Cambodia today is to take forward the revolutionary struggle by fighting for a workers' political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy, demanding the creation of democratic workers councils as the basis for the new state apparatus, and freedom for all parties which defend the revolution against counterrevolutionary attack. Above all, the struggle to go forward to final victory over capitalism requires the construction of Trotskyist parties, in Indochina and throughout the world, as part of a reborn Fourth International.

- Immediate Recognition of the Khmer Rouge and NLF/PRG Governments in Cambodia and Vietnam!
- Immediate Withdrawal of All U.S. Forces from Southeast Asia!
- Extend the Soviet Nuclear Shield to Cover Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh!
- Take Vientiane! For Political Revolution in Cambodia and Vietnam (North and South)! All Indochina Must Go Communist!
- For Trotskyist Parties in Indochina! Forward to the Rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

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U.S. Communism...

(continued from page 7)

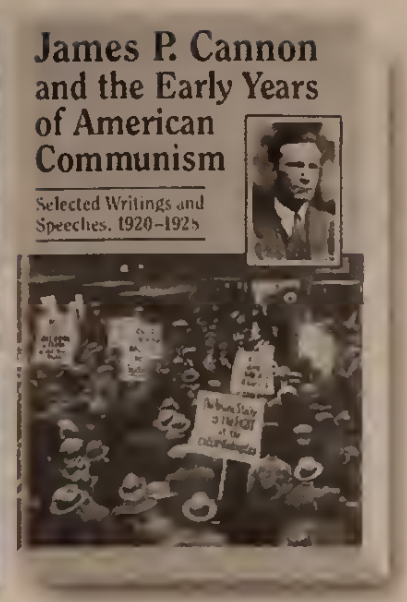
rather report on the American trade unions.

Over the next few years, black CP cadres, backed by the Comintern leadership, constantly prodded the American party to actively take up the fight for black freedom. Zumoff describes how McKay and Fort-Whiteman pushed this question at the Fourth and Fifth Comintern Congresses (in 1922 and 1924) respectively. Over the next period, there were several attempts by the CP to address black oppression, including the founding of the American Negro Labor Congress in 1925. However, these attempts were not particularly successful.

At its Sixth Congress in 1928, against the opposition of the vast majority of black Communists, the Stalinized Comintern wrongly declared that the American black population was an oppressed nation with the right of self-determination (i.e., national independence) in the so-called Black Belt in the South. As Zumoff writes, this theory was incorrect because black people "were an integral part of American society, albeit forcibly segregated at the bottom. Black struggle since antebellum times had been focused on ending racial oppression and for full *integration* into American society, not separation. A separate black nation state seemed fantastical and contradicted Marxist theory."

Despite the erroneous theoretical framework, the Comintern's intervention at the Sixth Congress had a positive influence in that it forced the CP to redouble its work among black people. It also underscored that black oppression was a form of special oppression and impelled the CP to establish roots in the South. The theory as such had little effect on the Communists' day-to-day work; they continued to fight for black equality—not separation. The CP in the 1930s carried out important and often dangerous work building integrated unions and organizing sharecroppers in the South. It also earned respect for leading the defense of black labor organizer and CPer Angelo Herndon in Georgia and of the Scottsboro Boys (nine black youth who faced legal lynching in Alabama on frame-up rape charges).

James P. Cannon and Red Army soldiers at time of Comintern Sixth Congress, 1928. Prometheus Research Library book of Cannon's early writings and speeches, available from Spartacist Publishing Company, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 for $14.50.



Revolutionary Continuity

An essential point that emerges from Zumoff's detailed study is the importance of revolutionary continuity. As Cannon noted in *History of American Trotskyism* (1944):

> "Out of the Communist Party in the United States came the nucleus of the [Trotskyist] Fourth International in this country. Therefore, we should say that the early period of the Communist movement in this country belongs to us; that we are tied to it by indissoluble bonds; that there is an uninterrupted continuity from the early days of the Communist movement, its brave struggles against persecution, its sacrifices, mistakes, faction fights and degeneration to the eventual resurgence of the movement under the banner of Trotskyism."

Like Cannon, the SL/U.S. and our comrades in the ICL do not turn our backs on what was valuable from the early CP, rather we claim that history as our own. We fight to impart the lessons of our revolutionary forebears to new generations of socialist fighters. Learning and assimilating these lessons is essential to the struggle for a workers America, a step toward a global communist society. ■

Britain...

(continued from page 3)

> that of the working man): they identified with it. None of this is true today."

The Attlee government elected in 1945 was the high point of British Labourism, hailed to this day by sundry leftists as the embodiment of its "socialist soul" for its nationalisations and the launch of the National Health Service. With a declining industrial base and a crumbling empire, Britain emerged from World War II as a poor cousin of the U.S., by then the hegemonic imperialist power. Labour was entrusted with the task of salvaging clapped out British imperialism. As Ceylonese (Lankan) Trotskyist Doric de Souza noted in the *Fourth International* (July/August 1947), journal of the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party: "In the face of popular hostility to capitalism in Britain, and popular disgust with the old 'muddling' policies of the Conservatives, so openly designed to protect vested interests, the British capitalist class had no alternative but to let the Labor Party hold the baby, certain that while this party was able to deceive and soothe the masses by its 'socialist program' it would do nothing to jeopardize the fundamental interests of British capitalism."

Faced with continuing economic decline, subsequent Labour governments were saddled with the need to curtail the power of the trade unions while maintaining Labour's working-class base, culminating in the "winter of discontent" under the Callaghan government in 1978-79. Thatcher came into office promising to do the job that Labour couldn't do, pursuing nakedly union-bashing policies and devastating much of the remaining industrial base on which trade-union power rested. Today it is commonly acknowledged that Thatcher's defeat of the heroic 1984-85 miners strike was a pivotal event in this regard. Yet the union bureaucrats who now point to the defeat of the miners and the flood of anti-union laws as evidence that struggle is impossible are of the same political breed as those, "left" and right, who allowed the defiant miners to face the power of the capitalist state alone, while Labour leader Neil Kinnock abetted Thatcher by violence-baiting the miners for daring to build mass pickets.

It was left to Tony Blair to draw the conclusion that the way forward for Labour was to eliminate the contradiction at its base by getting rid of its historic link with the unions and transforming it into an outright bourgeois party. For some years now, Labour has been moribund as a reformist party of the working class, though it still retains the financial and political support of a number of sizeable unions.

Press Association

Locked-out Unite union workers protest outside oil refinery in Grangemouth, Scotland, 20 October 2013.

The union bureaucrats, especially the leaders of Unite, the largest union, chose Ed Miliband as Labour leader in 2010 and embarked on a policy designed to "reclaim" Labour from the Blairites. The fruit of this policy was seen when the Labour leadership set up Unite for a vicious witch-hunting campaign at Scotland's Grangemouth oil refinery in 2013 (see "Union Bashing at Scottish Oil Refinery," *WV* No. 1035, 29 November 2013). Piling injury atop injury, last autumn the party leadership nominated arch-Blairite Jim Murphy, who is rightly despised for, among other things, his role in that witch hunt, to head up Scottish Labour. Unite, Unison and the GMB [general union] launched a vocal campaign for their own candidate, with Unite head Len McCluskey arguing that Murphy's election would be a political "death sentence" for Labour (*Telegraph*, 13 November 2014). Meanwhile all three union leaderships demonstrated their fealty to Labour in their usual fashion, giving the party a total of £3.6 million—the largest donations Labour received. Labour took the money and kicked them in the teeth: Murphy was elected without a hitch.

No Vote to TUSC!

Seeking to harvest votes from Labour's alienated trade-union base, the Greens have branched out from their comfort zone of anti-fracking and anti-nuke demonstrations. According to the *Morning Star* (10 March), for the first time ever, the Green Party will have a presence at the TUC conference this year. For years the Greens have been warmly received by the PCS public sector union, whose head Mark Serwotka has voted Green in the past. The president of the RMT [Rail, Maritime and Transport union], Peter Pinkney, is running for MP in Redcar, a traditional Labour stronghold. RMT officials are drawn in particular to the Greens' call to renationalise the railways. Far from being a socialist demand, this is simply a recognition that it is irrational—and deeply unpopular with the public—for essential services to be parcelled out to individual capitalists and speculators.

The Greens are a bourgeois party, thoroughly committed to capitalism. While in Britain today they claim to oppose austerity, the Green call for less consumption is inherently hostile to the industrial working class—and to social progress. In Brighton, where they have a majority on the city council, they have passed one budget after another implementing government cuts while pushing for a 5.9 per cent council tax increase that would hit the poor the hardest. However, to truly appreciate the hollowness of the Green pledge to peace and happiness, one need only consider Germany, where the German Greens were part of the government for seven years until 2005. During this time they pandered to the racist right by passing an immigration law that shut the door to most unskilled migrants. When Germany joined the U.S.-led wars against Serbia and Afghanistan, its foreign minister was a Green, Joschka Fischer. Recently German Green leader Rebecca Harms has been among the most fervent MEPs [Members of the European Parliament] in pushing for Western sanctions against Putin's Russia.

The fact that a number of union officials are signing up with the Greens is a sore spot for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which is running its own "anti-austerity" campaign. The RMT's Pinkney, now running for the Greens, was a member of the TUSC steering committee in February 2013, as was the late Bob Crow. The history of TUSC is rotten to the core. It was formed by the Socialist Party and Crow in 2010 as a by-product of chauvinist strikes against the employment of foreign workers at British construction sites in 2009. TUSC proudly includes on its steering committee—alongside the Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and assorted trade-union bureaucrats—leaders of the Prison Officers Association; the men and women responsible for inflicting sadistic misery on the wretched inmates of Her Majesty's prisons. That they should be embraced as "comrades" by the rest of the TUSC leadership says it all about these fake socialists. We say: cops and screws out of the trade-union movement!

According to the Socialist Party, the Greens are not "the answer" because they are "forced to basically accept the economic framework set out for them by capitalism" (socialistparty.org.uk, 28 January). The SWP similarly avers that the Greens are not a working-class party. Yet such verities do not stand in the way of the SWP calling for a vote to Green MP Caroline Lucas in Brighton (*Socialist Worker*, 20 January). Political support to bourgeois formations violates the basic Marxist principle of proletarian class independence. However, any mention of principle must leave these reformist fakers scratching their heads.

Buried in "What TUSC Stands For" is the slogan: "No to austerity and anti-working class policies, whether from the EU or Britain." It doesn't take a rocket scientist to notice that this deftly avoids the question of whether TUSC is for or against the European Union—which Labour strongly supports—or the single currency. Feeling the pressure of UKIP on the Tories' right flank, Cameron has vowed to hold a referendum on EU membership if he is re-elected. The growth of UKIP—and other racist anti-immigrant and fascist parties throughout Europe—partly results from the failure of the mass reformist and fake-socialist parties to oppose the EU, with many peddling the myth of a benignly capitalist "social Europe." In fact, under the banner of the "flexible labour market" the EU has rolled back trade-union rights, imposing low wages and precarious work contracts, while callously presiding over the deaths of thousands upon thousands of desperate immigrants who drown on the shoals of racist "Fortress Europe." *No deporta-*

Wage Slavery...

(continued from page 12)

in wages and working conditions.

The floodgates were opened by the 2009 bailout of the U.S. auto industry that the Obama administration engineered with the complicity of the UAW misleadership. As part of that betrayal, the union tops agreed to the slashing of wages and tens of thousands of jobs, the gutting of the retirement fund and a six-year no-strike pledge.

When the auto bosses expanded production again, adding 350,000 jobs, new-hires were brought in at half the pay of senior workers. Temp agencies have been increasingly used to undermine union protections and divide the workforce, with temporary contract workers toiling side by side with permanent employees for a fraction of the pay and no benefits. Many of these jobs are located in the open shop South, where not only U.S. companies but also German, Japanese and Korean corporations have opened plants to take advantage of low labor costs.

The struggle to unionize the South cannot be conducted on a narrowly economic basis but will have to directly confront the deep racial divide that has crippled past organizing efforts, depressing the living standards of all Southern workers. The importance of this struggle is underscored by the fact that low-wage production in the South has driven down the wages of workers more broadly—the wage and benefit gap between Midwestern and Southern workers narrowed from $7 in 2008 to $3.34 by the end of 2011.

Detroit auto sitdown strike of 1937. Industrial trade unions were built through militant class struggle.

Conditions in auto today are a clear condemnation of the UAW leadership's class collaboration. In fact, the UAW was built through militant class struggle like the heroic 1936-37 Flint sit-down strike, which defied court injunctions and faced down brutal cop assault. Such tumultuous class battles gave rise to the CIO unions. At Ford's River Rouge plant, union recognition was won through strike battles in 1941 that were forced to confront the racial prejudice that set white workers against their black class brothers.

The class-struggle methods that built the unions—strikes, mass pickets, plant occupations—are what is needed to secure higher wages, organize the unorganized and otherwise reverse the one-sided class war that the American bourgeoisie has been waging. The starting point must be the understanding that there is no common interest between workers and their capitalist exploiters. In the crucible of the struggles to revitalize the labor movement, a new, fighting leadership of the unions must be forged.

This task goes hand in hand with the fight to build a revolutionary internationalist workers party, a section of a reforged Fourth International—world party of socialist revolution. Such a party is needed to arm the workers with the political understanding of their capacity to liberate the working class and all the oppressed from the chains of capitalist bondage. A revolutionary workers party would champion full citizenship rights for immigrants and take up the fight against black oppression, the cornerstone of American capitalism, linking labor's cause to the struggles of all those ground down by capitalist rule.

In order to unite unionized and unorganized workers with the unemployed, a workers party would demand jobs for all and a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! Rising food and rent costs are eating away at pay—the workers need a sliding scale of wages to keep up with the cost of living. Quality medical care, including access to abortion and contraception, must be provided for all, free at the point of service, so that health care is not dependent on employment. These demands are not contingent on the bourgeoisie's ability to provide them—they flow from the needs of working people. As revolutionary Marxist leader Leon Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program (1938), such demands provide a bridge starting from "today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

Reformism vs. Revolution

The reformists of Socialist Alternative (SAlt) have become the poster boys of the left in the fight for raising the minimum wage. In imitation of the SEIU's Fight for 15 campaign, SAlt launched its own initiative for a $15 minimum wage, based not on class struggle but on getting state legislatures, city councils and mayors to mandate a higher wage. Rather than viewing the unions as potential organs to wage class struggle, SAlt presents them as lobbyists. In an article building for the April 15 protests, SAlt's Ty Moore complains that "while many union leaders will demand McDonald's and other employers pay $15, few put this same demand on city, state, and federal politicians" (15Now.org, 28 March).

SAlt's claim to fame is its spokesman Kshama Sawant's election to the Seattle city council in 2013, following a campaign focused on the $15 minimum wage. Sawant and her co-thinkers have hyped the subsequent passage of a Seattle minimum wage ordinance as a "historic moment." Beginning this month, big companies will have two years to phase in the $15 minimum wage and small companies—defined as having fewer than *500* employees—will have six years. SAlt's perspective of relying on capitalist politicians to raise wages reflects its reformist view that "socialism" can be achieved through legislative reform of the capitalist system. SAlt's ultimate demand is to take into public ownership the largest corporations and run them under democratic control. Thus its newspaper's "What We Stand For" column does not even mention the word revolution.

It will take a workers revolution to wrest control of the productive capacity of society from the capitalist exploiters. The capitalist state, a machine for the repression of working people and the oppressed, will be swept away and a workers state set up in its place. Socialism, a society of material abundance, cannot be achieved short of workers revolutions on an international scale that will allow the tremendous expansion of the productive forces of society, creating conditions for the disappearance of all social inequalities. ■

Baltimore...

(continued from page 1)

neck, Gray screamed for his life. Cops dragged him to a van as bystanders demanded that they call an ambulance. The cop van drove around for over 30 minutes before he got medical attention. According to medical experts, Gray's neck could only have been broken by "powerful blunt force." Freddie Gray is not the first person to die after what the cops call a "rough ride" in one of their vans—in 2005, 43-year-old Dondi Johnson Sr. was subjected to similar torture. From 87-year-old grandmothers to pregnant women, church deacons and young boys on dirt bikes, few blacks and Latinos are safe from violent attack by the marauding Baltimore cops.

Black preachers and Democrats are trying to douse the justified anger of the ghetto masses. The loud refrain from Obama on down is how these "criminals" have damaged the message of "legitimate" protesters, i.e., the preachers and others pleading for police reform. A comment on social media captured the hypocrisy: "I do not mourn broken windows. I mourn broken necks." The NAACP and Urban League are talking of a "national crisis" because they are clearly worried that their empty reform schemes cannot keep the lid on the seething discontent.

Black people are being pushed beyond the limit—terrorized by cops and the courts, deprived of any kind of job, denied decent education and housing. U.S. capitalism has no use for a whole generation of black youth. All that awaits them is death—a slow death from disease, malnutrition, drugs and prison, or a fast one in the execution chambers or gunned down on the streets.

The true criminals are the thugs in blue who rampage with impunity, maiming and killing those whose crime is to be poor and black. Above them stand their bosses: the criminal U.S. rulers who have long been in the business of looting and pillaging at home and abroad. Riots are an expression of despair that can go in many directions. The outbreak of this elemental, spontaneous upheaval, while understandable, cannot end the hellish conditions of life of the black population. The rage of the dispossessed in the ghettos must be linked up with the millions of black, white and immigrant working people around the country whose jobs, wages and living conditions are under constant assault. The situation cries out for revolutionary leadership—a workers party—to organize the power of labor and unite behind it all the oppressed in a struggle to get rid of the whole rotten, racist capitalist system. ■

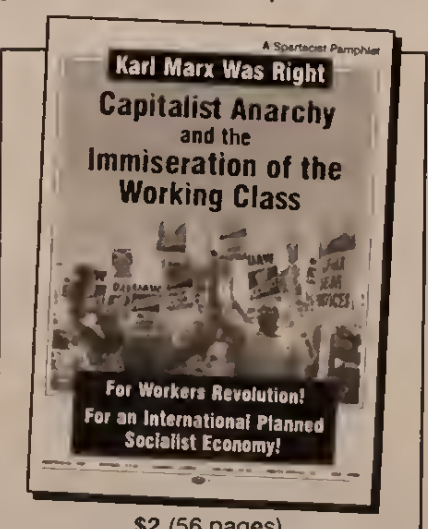
tions! Full citizenship rights for all who make it here!

As proletarian internationalists, we have consistently opposed the imperialist EU—and the euro—on principle. It was originally established as an adjunct of NATO, the imperialist military alliance created by the U.S. to "roll back Communism" and destroy the Soviet Union. From its beginnings it has been a mechanism by which the combined capitalist powers impose austerity on their own working classes. The dominant powers subordinate the weaker ones, such as Greece, Ireland and the former deformed workers states of Eastern Europe. The oppressive relationship fuels great-power chauvinism in the oppressor states and a nationalist reaction in the oppressed countries.

Across western Europe, many of the social programmes known as the "welfare state" were granted by the capitalist ruling classes in the aftermath of World War II as a response to the existence of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state which represented an alternative to capitalist exploitation and misery. In the wake of capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which the various reformist left groups supported, they have dispensed with lip service to the notion of socialist revolution. As miserable as capitalism has proven itself to be, they have accepted that there is no alternative. Having offered "old" Labour nostrums about the social welfare state, the reformists today limit their horizons simply to the fight against further austerity cuts—a "fight," moreover, confined to the small change of parliamentary combinations. Class struggle has been deleted from their vocabulary. Workers Power, more candid than most, asserts in a 10 February article titled: "We Can't Afford Another Tory Government" that the Tories can be stopped from winning another term. "To do this," they say, "the unions are key." And how so—"working class voters will not turn out in their millions unless we can force the union leaders to place clear demands on Labour." This, then, is the task left to the unions, the defensive organisations of the working class: to sucker the millions of workers who have come to despise Labour hack into the fold. And the task of the reformist left fringe? To provide the bureaucrats with the soothing language to do the trick.

The unions are indeed key to turning things around—not by coralling voting cattle for Labour but by engaging in some ***hard class struggle***. Because they have their hands on the levers of production, the working class uniquely has the social power and interest to drive back the attacks on working people, immigrants and all the oppressed. The situation is pretty grim for the unions these days, but far from hopeless. Instead of a leadership that urges workers to bow to the bosses' laws and stomps on any indication of the will to struggle, the unions need a leadership that motivates and educates the proletariat on the necessity and inevitability of collective labour struggle against the exploiters, that advances a bold strategy to organise the unorganised—including migrant workers—and to revive the strength of the trade unions, that seeks to fight union-bashing privatisation schemes not in the courtroom but on the picket line, that does not limit itself to what the capitalists say is affordable but demands what the workers need. Such a leadership will be based on the understanding that there are no common interests between the working class and the capitalist class. It will be built in the crucible of struggle, including political struggle against the pro-capitalist union misleaders.

We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, dedicated to the task of leading the working class to power. This requires socialist revolution to overthrow the entire capitalist order, shattering the bourgeois state and erecting a workers state—the dictatorship of the proletariat—to expropriate the capitalist bloodsuckers. Socialist revolutions in the major capitalist countries will lay the basis for rationally planned economies based on an international division of labour, leading to a qualitative development of the productive forces that opens the road to the elimination of poverty, oppression and war and the creation of a classless, egalitarian socialist society. ■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

Capitalism Means Wage Slavery

For Class Struggle Against Poverty Wages!

While profits are booming for the rapacious U.S. capitalists, wide swaths of the working population struggle daily to survive. More than 40 percent of wage-earners make less than $15 an hour. One-quarter of the workforce depends on some form of public assistance, which itself has been slashed to the bone. One out of every five households with children is unable to put enough food on the table. The exorbitant cost of health care means that an accident or illness can plunge a family into crippling debt. People working two and three jobs to get by still cannot afford the spike in rents, driving many families into homelessness.

On April 15, rallies calling for a higher minimum wage took place across the country as part of the Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) Fight for 15 campaign. The protests had wide appeal, drawing in non-union employees from fast-food chains and other service sectors as well as unionized UPS, airport, hospital and hotel workers, many of whom also get rock-bottom wages. However, the SEIU tops' Fight for 15 campaign is based on the lie that the way to raise wages is to lobby capitalist Democrats, like those given pride of place at the rallies, and to appeal to the supposed good conscience of the employers. To begin to address the burning needs of working people requires a completely different approach: mobilizing the power of the multiracial working class against the capitalist exploiters.

In the course of the two-year Fight for 15 campaign, the largely female and heavily black and Latino fast-food workers have demonstrated their courage and militancy. Rallying in front of their workplaces and taking to the streets, they have risked their jobs as well as arrest. The struggle of the fast-food workers has the potential to inspire broader layers of the working class to action. Food-service workers, easily replaced and dispersed among hundreds of thousands of establishments, cannot win this battle alone. It is necessary to mobilize food processing, warehouse and transportation workers, who have the potential to shut down the fast-food chains by stopping the delivery of food. ***The unions must fight to organize the unorganized!***

In opposition to such a class-struggle perspective, the existing leadership of the unions promotes the so-called partnership of labor and capital, subordinating the needs of the working class to what is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. By chaining the unions to the class enemy, primarily through support to the Democratic Party, the trade-union bureaucracy has effectively done the dirty work of keeping class peace while yielding to the bosses' wage-slashing attacks. In the process, they have grievously undermined the strength of the labor movement—over the last four decades, unionization in manufacturing, transportation and construction has been cut in half.

WV Photo

AP

Above: April 15 rally of low-wage workers in New York City. Below: Workers on production line at Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, 2013. About half of all auto workers make under $15 an hour.

All the while, the trade-union tops have poured hundreds of millions of dollars and countless man-hours into Democratic election campaigns. In contrast to the Republicans, Democrats occasionally strike a pose as "friends of labor," which can make them more effective in wresting concessions from workers and sticking it to the poor. For example, Bill Clinton rammed through Ronald Reagan's dream project of "ending welfare as we know it," forcing people to work for their benefits. That measure also aimed at undercutting the unions. Barack Obama escalated his predecessor's attacks on public education and the teachers unions. At the April 15 rally in San Francisco, SEIU president Mary Kay Henry gushed over Hillary Clinton's purported solidarity with the working poor—Clinton's regard for workers and the poor can be seen in the carnage and destruction unleashed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and beyond when she was Secretary of State.

In bourgeois quarters, there is some sentiment for slightly raising the minimum wage. With an eye to the 2016 elections, Democrats have come out for miserly increases. The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that some retail and fast-food employers are raising wages slightly to reduce employee turnover. Liberal commentators and establishment ideologues alike complain that taxpayers are having to subsidize Wal-Mart and McDonald's workers who are on welfare because their wages are so low. Some more far-sighted elements of the U.S. bourgeoisie also worry that they are sitting on top of a tinder pile of discontent that could be ignited by the spark of social protest.

Even if the minimum hourly wage were increased to $15, an amount higher than what Democrats are generally proposing, it would amount to only $31,000 a year, assuming a 40-hour workweek. And many employers try to avoid hiring full-time workers because they do not want to pay for benefits. Of course, any increase in the minimum wage would be welcome. But what is on offer is still poverty wages.

The drive to pauperize the working class is inherent to the capitalist system of wage slavery. The profits of the capitalist class, which owns industry and the banks, come from the exploitation of labor. On average, the wages that workers receive are equal to the amount necessary to maintain themselves and raise the next generation of toilers. Wages correspond to only a fraction of the value that labor creates during the workday. For example, a worker may produce eight hours' worth of value but be compensated for only three of them in his wages. The other five hours create "surplus value," the source of profit for the capitalist.

The capitalist class is constantly driven by competition to ratchet up the rate of exploitation (the ratio of surplus value to wages) by lengthening the workday, reducing wages, speeding up production, etc. By withholding their labor and cutting off the flow of profits, workers have the power to wrest better wages and working conditions from the capitalists. The level of wages at any given time is determined by the balance of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

To emancipate itself, the proletariat must sweep away the system of capitalist production for profit through socialist revolution. In the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels observed:

> "The bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him instead of being fed by him."

More than 150 years later, the indictment is even more damning of the obscenely wealthy U.S. bourgeoisie, the world's dominant imperialist power, which has unleashed untold misery on working people and the oppressed around the globe.

For a Fighting Workers Movement!

Even in auto manufacturing, which historically had high-paying union jobs, half of all production workers currently make under $15 an hour. The anti-union assault on auto workers kicked into high gear when the U.S. auto giants ceased to be competitive with their German and Japanese imperialist rivals, who had rebuilt their industrial base in the two decades after World War II. With the aim of keeping U.S. auto manufacturing competitive, the United Auto Workers (UAW) bureaucracy has for many years presided over a sharp decline

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Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party!

WORKERS VANGUARD

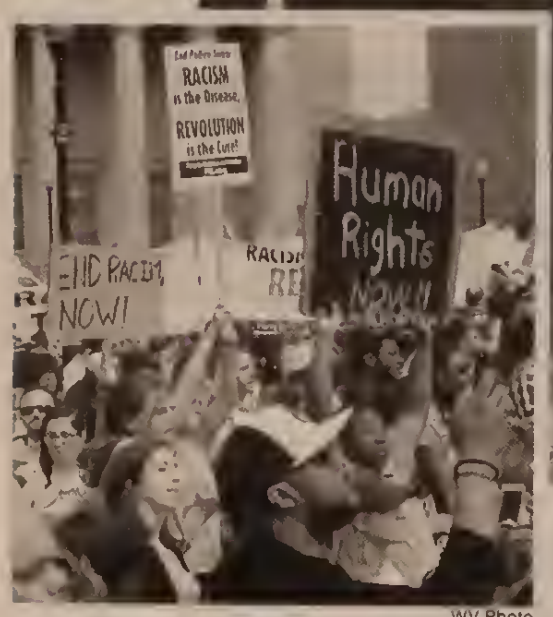
50¢

No. 1068

15 May 2015

Break with the Democrats! For a Multiracial Workers Party!

Baltimore: Racist Cop Terror and Capitalist Decay



WV Photo

Reuters

WV Photo

Impoverished black neighborhood in Baltimore (center). May 2 protest against racist police terror outside City Hall (left) surrounded by National Guard troops (right).

The filing of charges on May 1 against six Baltimore cops involved in the killing of Freddie Gray was aimed at putting a lid on the seething discontent of the majority black city, which had erupted in an elemental outpouring of rage four days earlier. The capitalist ruling class and its black Democratic Party frontmen got some blowback against their system of immiseration and racist cop terror; now they hope that things can go back to normal. But for most people in the inner-city slums of Baltimore, normal life means intolerable poverty, urban decay and state violence.

After Gray's funeral on April 27, riot cops had swarmed into West Baltimore's Mondawmin neighborhood. The cops blockaded roads and stopped buses as they corralled youth into the area of the Mondawmin Mall. Pent-up ghetto fury exploded in the face of these cop provocations. A few stores were trashed and a CVS pharmacy was burned. The state was quick to send in the National Guard and a curfew was imposed. We said: "*Notional Guord out now! Down with the cops' stote of siege! Free oll those orrested and drop oll charges!*" ("Black Baltimore's Justified Rage," *WV* No. 1067, 1 May).

The Guard has now been withdrawn, a portion of the nearly 500 arrested have been released and the curfew has been lifted for adults. (Baltimore still maintains one of the strictest youth curfews in the country—kids younger than 14 have to be indoors by 9 p.m.) However, charges are still pending against many and the Baltimore police threaten that those arrested and released could still face charges.

The disparity between the treatment of the perpetrators of cop terror and their victims was seen by the fact that the six cops were all immediately released on bail. In contrast, Allen Bullock, an 18-year-old protester who allegedly smashed a traffic cone through a police car's windshield, was held in jail for nearly two weeks. It took his parents that long to raise the money for his bail, which was set at $500,000—higher than that for any of the killer cops.

Even though the six cops have been charged, it does not mean that they will end up behind bars. Killer cops are rarely prosecuted and even more rarely convicted; on April 20, the Chicago cop who killed Rekia Boyd in 2012 (the first cop in that city in more than 15 years to face charges in a fatal shooting) was let off. As we noted after the acquittal of four New York City cops who blew away African immigrant Amadou Diallo in a hail of 41 bullets in 1999: "By the standards of bourgeois legality, the cops were not guilty of any crime when they gunned down the 22-year-old unarmed black man. They were doing the job they are paid to do under racist capitalism" (*WV* No. 731, 10 March 2000).

That job also includes attacking the picket lines of striking workers, detaining immigrants, rounding up Muslims under the "war on terror" and targeting those who protest against the depravities of the capitalist profit system. It does not matter if the cops are black or white, have attended "sensitivity training" or wear body cameras. Indeed, three of the six cops who arrested Freddie Gray, took him for a "rough ride" in the back of their van and broke his neck were black.

The city filed charges to clean up appearances so that the police can better go about their business of repression. The cops' masters in Washington also stepped in to help quell the flames of protest by announcing a federal investigation of the Baltimore police under the auspices of President Obama's new attorney general, Loretta Lynch. From the White House on down, bourgeois politicians speak of the need to "rebuild trust" in law enforcement, worried that the illusion that the police "serve and protect" the population as a whole has become very threadbare. In fact, the purpose of the police, together with the courts, prisons and military at the core of the capitalist state, is to enforce the rule of the capitalist exploiters through the violent suppression of the working class, black people and all the oppressed.

The reformist left has done its part to spread the lie that the police can be made accountable to the "will of the people." The International Socialist Organization among others repeats the call to "send the killer cops to jail," channeling anger over cop terror right back into the very "justice" system that upholds state violence in every way. For its part, the Workers World Party ludicrously claims of Loretta Lynch, now top cop of U.S. capitalism: "The ruling class is trying to steer her in a pro-police direction" (workers.org, 27 April). They go on, "Whether Lynch will actually play the role that is expected of her remains to be seen." But make no mistake: her entire career as a prosecutor has been as a legal enforcer of state repression.

The crimes of the killer cops should be met by massive, militant protest centered on the social power of the multiracial working class. But the pretenses of the socialist fakers to the contrary, the capitalist state and its agents cannot be made to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. The truth is that there will be no end to racist police brutality until the capitalist system the cops serve is uprooted through a proletarian socialist revolution.

From 1968 to 2015: Capitalists Loot Baltimore

Baltimore is a testament to the bankruptcy of police reform and other such schemes. Many were implemented there

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Women and Revolution

The Marxist Approach to Women's Liberation

Communism and the Family

See Page 4

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On 2003 Charleston Cop Killing of Asberry Wylder

24 April 2015

Dear Workers Vanguard,

My family's deep seeded belief that our brother, Asberry Wylder was wrongfully killed by North Charleston Police Department in November of 2003 has been reignited by the shooting death of Walter Scott.

We never faltered in our conviction that this was a department cover up. The many cases of suspicion surrounding the multiplicity of shootings of black men here, and nationally only served to strengthen our prayer that law enforcement's wrong doing would one day be exposed to the unbiased public.

Justice was miserably underserved in Asberry's case. The camera of a key witness containing photos, depicting police brutality was confiscated and not returned. While some photos were released, those corroborating the stories of police brutality as shared by witnesses were never released. Naturally, the local coroner's report supported that of the police; however, a second autopsy by a family hired expert pathologist refuted the conclusions drawn by the Charleston County Coroner's Office. Still, NO JUSTICE.

Recently, an Arizona policeman was found justified in running over a suspect as he walked with his back turned. Reasons given for the acceptance of this horrendous act include the safety of the suspect (who was walking with a loaded gun), and the safety of the community and other policemen. If this was considered justifiable, we continue to question if shooting Asherry was justifiable. He was mentally ill, in a drunken state (.15 percent blood-alcohol level), and visually impaired due to being pepper sprayed. Could four robust officers ***really*** not subdue him, in a non deadly manner?

It was evident in 2003 as it is evident in 2015, where North Charleston Police Department is concerned, Black Lives Do Not Matter. Had it not been for "the ram in the bush", Feidin Santana, filming it all, Scott's death would have resulted in another cover up. Because of Officer Slager's blatant lack of integrity and perhaps the code of silence by other officers present, it has been revealed to society that corruption exists within the North Charleston Police Department. Sadly, the community at large is not surprised, for it is what we have known all along.

Though denied, Asberry's case was one to receive national attention in a quest for justice. With all that has transpired locally, we feel this may be our last attempt at justice for our family member. Our family requests that the Asberry Wylder Case be reopened.

Most Sincerely,
William H. Wylder
Member ILA Local 1422

On Cromwell and the Levellers

6 April 2015

To *Workers Vanguard*,

I read with great interest the admirable series on "The Rise of British Imperialism" [*WV*s Nos. 1062 and 1063, 20 February and 6 March 2015], and the important correction published in *WV* #1064. I would like to add a further clarification about the Levellers.

The correction refers to the Levellers as one of the radical egalitarian sects. I suggest this understates their importance. Far from being a small religious sect, like the Ranters or Quakers, the Levellers were an organized secular party with, uniquely, mass support in the late 1640s, particularly in London and the New Model Army. As the quote from Trotsky indicates, "The Levellers were the incipient party of the left wing of the petty bourgeoisie...who had become the most important force of the revolution."

The Levellers' bourgeois democratic program addressed such issues as voting rights, electoral reform, regular Parliaments, religious tolerance, military impressment, equality before the law, abolition of debtors prison, tithes, the abolition of monarchy, sovereignty of the people, and more. They had groups in many parts of the country, and, for a time, a weekly newspaper. Women were encouraged to be, and were, active members. Leveller propaganda endorsed the elected representatives of the soldiers (called Agitators or Agents) against disbandment by the Presbyterian-dominated Parliament in the spring of 1647 and sparked petitions from civilians and regiments for justice against Charles I in the autumn of 1648, leading up to his execution. As the correction noted, Levellers inspired soldiers to struggle against the re-conquest of Ireland. The Levellers' principled moral stance was that the Irish had as much right to be free in their own country as the English did in theirs. At a time when Irish "papists" had long been derided as little more than savages the Levellers' advocacy of such an advanced view was very much to their credit.

At the same time the party was not nearly as egalitarian as the communist Diggers, who called themselves the True Levellers. But it was the Levellers who changed the argument within the Independent movement from one about religion to one based on politics. That they evoked the considerable response which they did represented the maturing consciousness of the revolutionary forces of the time, and in the process pushed Cromwell further than he wanted to go.

Comradely,
Mike S.

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The Bombing of Black Tulsa

TROTSKY

LENIN

On 31 May 1921, police obliterated the heart of black Tulsa, Oklahoma, dropping dynamite from airplanes that killed at least 75 people. This racist bombing, followed by the detention of thousands of black people, came after black residents had taken up arms to defend a teenager from a white lynch mob. In the face of anti-black pogroms sweeping American cities from East St. Louis to Washington, D.C., at the end of World War I, black radicals like those in the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) advocated race pride and armed self-defense against racist terror. Leaders of the ABB, which was mainly composed of West Indian immigrants, joined the early Communist Party, drawn by the liberating promise of the October 1917 proletarian revolution in Russia. Accused of inciting a "race riot" in Tulsa, the ABB replied with a defiant editorial excerpted below.

As at Washington, D.C., so at Tulsa, Okla. The entire power of the State, all of the forces of capitalist "law and order," were turned upon the Negro in the process of "putting down" race riots that were started and most actively prosecuted by white mobs. All the deputies sworn in by the Tulsa authorities during the recent race riot were *white*. All the prisoners taken up and sent into concentration camps by these deputies, the Tulsa city police and the Oklahoma State militia were *colored*. That is the kind of justice the Negro gets in capitalist America! That is the kind of justice the Jew used to get in capitalist-Czarist Russia, until the workers of all races arose in their wrath and overthrew the capitalist-Czarist combination, and set up Soviets. Now the workers of all races get equal justice—in Russia. How long will the Negro in America continue to fall for capitalist bunk? How many more Tulsas will it take to line up the Negro where by all race interest he belongs—with the radical forces of the world that are working for the overthrow of capitalism and the dawn of a new day, a new heaven and a new earth?

—"The Tulsa Outrage," *Crusader*, July 1921

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13 May 1985 MOVE Massacre

May 13 marks 30 years since the Philadelphia police firebombed the MOVE organization's Osage Avenue home. Eleven black people, including five children, were burned alive and an entire city block was incinerated. We reprint below excerpts from our article "Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!" (*WV* No. 380, 31 May 1985), published soon after this atrocity.

The bombing culminated a 12-hour siege by Philly police on the MOVE commune for being a supposed public nuisance. Police water cannons pumped 1,000 gallons of water per minute at the house. Cops then fired over 10,000 rounds of ammunition before dropping a satchel of explosives (provided by the Feds) on the roof, which ignited the firestorm. As they let the fire burn, the police shot at anyone who attempted to flee. The sole adult survivor, Ramona Africa, spent seven years in prison for managing to escape. (For more, see "*Let the Fire Burn*: A Powerful Documentary on the 1985 Bombing of MOVE," *WV* No. 1034, 15 November 2013.)

From the day of the bombing, the Spartacist League has solidarized with MOVE. In contrast, our reformist opponents, while denouncing "excessive" force, rushed to the defense of Wilson Goode, Philly's first black mayor, who ordered the assault. For example, Workers World Party insisted that Goode was "merely informed" of the massacre and "not a participant in the plans." For its part, the Socialist Workers Party participated in a liberal coalition that debated whether to censor the "far out" MOVE members at a May 30 demonstration called to protest the bombing. The SL was prepared to commit considerable forces to this event, but when MOVE understandably pulled out, in solidarity we did so as well.

In July 1985, the SL held a public forum in New York City where MOVE supporters spoke and were able to express their outrage and pain. During discussion, a League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) member denounced us for not polemicizing against MOVE, which would have been obscene, to say the least. The LRP later blamed the MOVE victims for their own massacre, writing: "MOVE's isolation opened it up for a police siege" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Summer 1985).

The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the SL—began providing monthly stipends for Ramona Africa and the MOVE 9, who were imprisoned on frame-up charges of killing a Philly cop during a 1978 cop siege of their Powelton Village home. The PDC continues to provide stipends to the seven MOVE 9 members who remain incarcerated today, two having died behind bars. ***Free all the MOVE prisoners!***

Through the MOVE prisoners, in the late 1980s we learned of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and award-winning journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" who exposed the racist cop vendetta against MOVE and was later framed up for the December 1981 killing of a Philly police officer. Mumia spent three decades on death row, and he remains condemned to life in prison without parole. He is now gravely ill (see box). ***Free Mumia Aba-Jamal now!***

We will not forget the May 1985 massacre of MOVE and on this anniversary we continue our fight to sear it into the collective memory of the working class and oppressed.

* * *

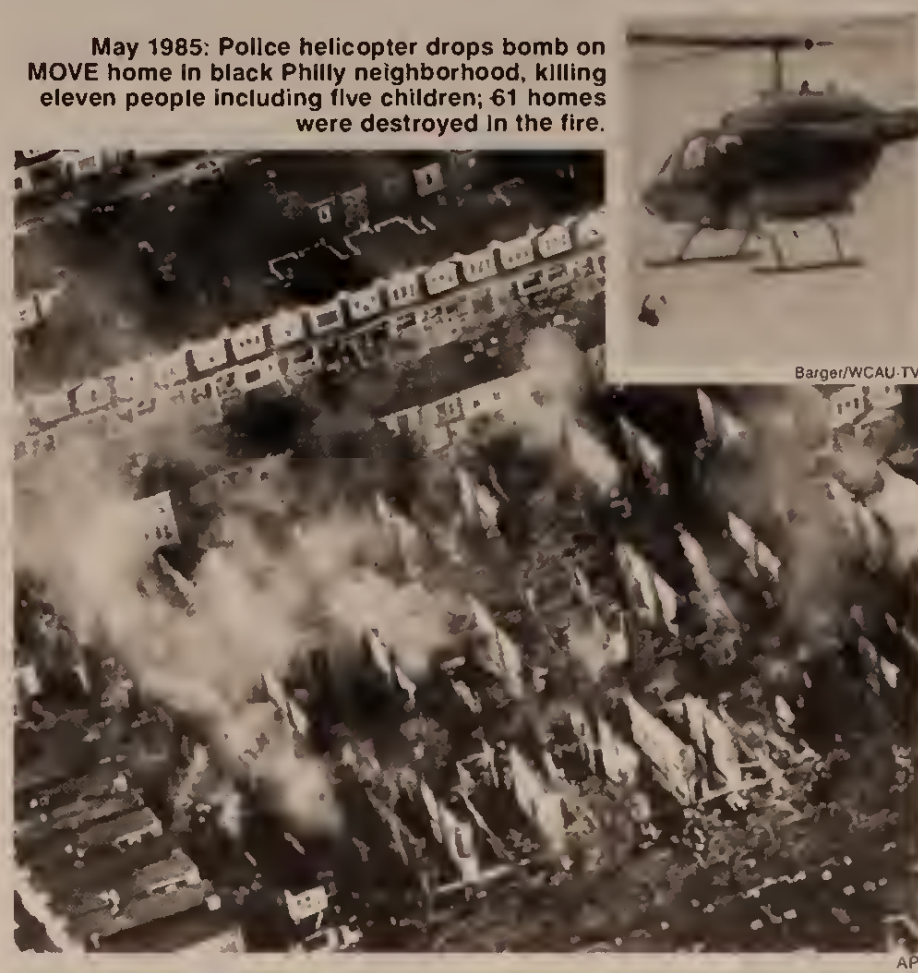
"Attention, MOVE. This is America." With this ultimatum, delivered over a cop bullhorn at 5:40 a.m. on May 13, there began the hideous siege and mass murder by firebombing of a black neighborhood in West Philadelphia. At least four black children, seven black men and women burned alive and entire city blocks destroyed in a deliberate firestorm. For the alleged "crime" of being a social nuisance, and without a fig leaf of legality hiding the state's racist terror, MOVE members were incinerated, hundreds were left homeless and without possessions. Watch your ass or ***you could be next!***—this was the message to the black people of America, and not just the black people. Black Democrat Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode vowed, "I would do it again." But this wasn't simply the act of Goode, his city manager, retired two-star general Leo Brooks, and the notoriously racist Philadelphia police department. The bloody tracks of Ronald Reagan's "anti-terrorist" war on blacks, labor and the left are all over West Philadelphia. The grisly Philly firebombing is the symbol of Reagan's America.

"Reagan Bombs Black Babies," we headlined last issue, as the cops turned the neat Osage Avenue neighborhood of black homeowners into a raging inferno. Now as the details of the sinister operation emerge, it is utterly clear that this heinous crime was approved right at the top. Philadelphia police met with the FBI and reviewed strategy and tactics two days before the operation against MOVE began. Daryl "Choke Hold" Gates, chief of the notoriously racist Los Angeles Police Department, hailed the Philadelphia firestorm on the national TV show, "Face the Nation," May 19, saying Mayor Goode was on his short "heroes list." And U.S. attorney general Edwin Meese, speaking before the "California Peace Officers' Association" in San Francisco May 16, praised Wilson Goode's actions as "a good example" to emulate! Meese's praise wasn't for "any particulars" in the case, a Justice Department spokesman later claimed. Oh, no?...

This state demands blood sacrifice, like some Aztec god. It's enough to turn you into a raving anarchist. (In fact, when Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* at the height of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the staid social democrats did accuse him of anarchism.) But the state rules on behalf of one class, the capitalist class, and more than a century after the Civil War it's capitalist wage slavery that must be smashed to free black America.

Black working people must take the lead to break with the Democrats and fight for a freedom-labor party based on a class-struggle program to place the organized power of the unions firmly behind the just demands of the ghetto masses for liberation. And Philadelphia has a combative labor movement with a proven capacity to fight: transit workers and school employee unions have repeatedly gone on strike in recent years. The unions, particularly those with large black memberships, should have shut down Philly over this racist atrocity. After all, they're high on the government's hit list.

Wilson Goode and the firebombing of West Philadelphia are the ultimate proof that the black Democratic mayors are the front men for Reagan's war on black people. In the 1960s as the ghettos burned with black rage and frustration, black mayors were installed in many of America's big cities to put out the fires. But LBJ's firemen are now Reagan's arsonists. It is left to the communists to give organized expression to the felt outrage of the black people in the face of this bloody cop massacre and to fight for the elementary right of black self-defense against the racist terrorists.



May 1985: Police helicopter drops bomb on MOVE home in black Philly neighborhood, killing eleven people including five children; 61 homes were destroyed in the fire.

Barger/WCAU-TV

AP

"Philly Inferno: Racist Murder!"

Murder and Lies

In the aftermath of the West Philly massacre, Goode held thrice-daily press conferences, piling lie upon lie in hopes that the enormity of his crime would be buried under an avalanche of hysteria about MOVE. "We cannot permit any terrorist group or any revolutionary group... to hold a whole neighborhood or a whole city hostage," he said. Some "terrorists"! MOVE grew out of a local commune, whose murky politics, variously described as "back-to-nature" and "anarchist," are nothing but an inchoate cry of despair for the future of black people in racist America. They attacked no one, and just sat in their ramshackle commune waiting for the holocaust to hit. They even offered to surrender days earlier, if the mayor would guarantee no arrests. But a surrender wasn't wanted. The rulers just burned them alive...for using a loudspeaker at 3 a.m. and violating the city sanitary code.

Goode said MOVE was an "urban guerrilla group bent on absolute destruction." The "evidence"? The mayor could only cite housing code violations and unpaid utility bills. If you don't pay your rent, they blow you away like Bronx black grandmother Eleanor Bumpurs. If you don't pay the gas bill, they blow your house away—and the rest of the neighborhood for good measure. The only known survivors are Birdie Africa, 13, hospitalized with second-degree burns, and Ramona Johnson Africa, 30, imprisoned in lieu of $3.2 million bail. The charges? "Conspiracy to riot" (by sitting in her house?) and "disorderly conduct." Drop the charges against Ramona Johnson Africa and all the MOVE prisoners!

In the hours and days after the firebombing, Goode and police commissioner Sambor claimed MOVE had a massive arsenal in the house, including machine guns and semiautomatic weapons. What the press luridly called their "cache" of weapons turned out to be one rifle, two shotguns and three pistols—millions of American homes have as much. Explaining why police held back firefighters as the blaze spread, city manager Brooks said they feared sniper fire

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MUMIA STILL GRAVELY ILL

The life of class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is in imminent danger. On March 30, verging on a diabetic coma, Mumia was rushed to an intensive care unit. His health has continued to deteriorate and prison officials have cruelly withheld needed medical treatment and adequate nutrition. Weeks ago, a CT scan showed abnormal lymph nodes which could indicate lymphoma.

As the Partisan Defense Committee noted in its 13 April statement (reprinted in *WV* No. 1066, 17 April), "The grotesque treatment of prisoners is exacerbated many times over for those, like Mumia, locked away for fighting against this racist capitalist order." The PDC has contributed to Mumia's medical care, and urges others to do the same. Readers who want to make contributions can go to: www.indiegogo.com/projects/mumia-abu-jamal-needs-medical-care-now. To correspond with Mumia, write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335, SCI Mahanoy, 301 Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932.

The Marxist Approach to Women's Liberation
Communism and the Family

PART ONE

In the *Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program*, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) lays out our task of "building Leninist parties as national sections of a democratic-centralist international whose purpose is to lead the working class to victory through socialist revolutions throughout the world" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998). Only through the seizure of power can the proletariat end capitalism as a system and open the road to a world without exploitation and oppression. Crucial to this perspective is the fight for the emancipation of women, whose oppression goes back to the beginning of private property and cannot be eliminated short of the abolition of class society.

The *Declaration* explains that ultimately our goal is the creation of a new, communist society:

> "The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all."

It used to be that the goal of a communist society was accepted as the purpose of most tendencies calling themselves Marxist, even as they agreed on little else. But since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 this is no longer the case. The ICL alone adheres to the prospect of world communism as first put forward by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

This "death of communism" ideological climate has resulted in the prevalence of false and narrow ideas about Marxism. In popular consciousness, communism has been reduced to economic leveling (equality at a low level of income and consumption) under state ownership of economic resources. On the contrary, the material basis for the realization of the Marxist program is the *overcoming of economic scarcity* through the progressive increase in the productivity of labor. This will take several generations of socialist development based on a worldwide collectivized economy to come into full being. Thus, a society would develop in which the state (a special coercive apparatus defending the ruling-class order through armed bodies of men) has withered away, national affiliation has disappeared, and the institution of the family—the main source of the oppression of women—has been replaced by collective means of caring for and socializing children and by the fullest freedom of sexual relations.

Marxism and "Human Nature"

In the past, intellectuals who considered such a society undesirable and/or impossible to attain nonetheless recognized that it was what Marxists meant by communism. For example, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), a popular exposition of his worldview, Sigmund Freud presented a brief critique of communism. There is no evidence that he had studied the works of Marx and Engels nor read those of V.I. Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders. His understanding (and misunderstanding) of communism was held by many European and American intellectuals of the time, whatever their political persuasions.

Freud based his critique of communism on his view that "the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man." He concluded that the communist project of a harmonious society was contrary to human nature:

> "I have no concern with any economic criticisms of the communist system; I cannot enquire into whether the abolition of private property is expedient or advantageous. But I am able to recognize that the psychological premises on which the system is based are an untenable illusion. In abolishing private property we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments, certainly a strong one, though certainly not the strongest; but we have in no way altered the differences in power and influence which are misused by aggressiveness, nor have we altered anything in its nature.... If we do away with personal rights over material wealth, there still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relations, which is bound to become the source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility among men who in other respects are on an equal footing. If we were to remove this factor, too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus abolishing the family, the germ-cell of civilization, we cannot, it is true, easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take; but one thing we can expect, and that is that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there."

Freud rightly understood that in the communist vision of a future society the family will have withered away while there will be "complete freedom in sexual life." Freud's view was in error in that Marxists recognize that the family cannot be simply abolished; its necessary functions, especially the rearing of the next generation, must be ***replaced*** through socialized means of childcare and housework.

While Freud no longer has the ideological authority he once had, the idea that "human nature" makes a communist world impossible remains a common one, although the specific arguments may differ. Marxists, on the other hand, insist that material scarcity is what gives rise to savage scrambles over scanty resources. This is why communism is conceivable only with unprecedented material abundance, accompanied by a huge leap in the cultural level of society. It is the existence of *classes*, today in the form of the outmoded capitalist-imperialist order, that infests human society with brutality and violence. As Marxist author Isaac Deutscher wrote in "On Socialist Man" (1967), "*Homo homini lupus* [man is a wolf to man] is the battle cry against progress and socialism" for those "who operate the bogey of the *eternal* human *lupus* in the interest of the real and bloody *lupus* of *contemporary* imperialism." [emphasis in original]

Freud himself identified "innate aggression" in sexual relations as the problem with human nature. And what of that? The social pathology associated with what Freud perceived as sexual rivalry has little reason to exist in a fully free, communal society in which sexual life is independent of access to food, shelter, education and every daily need and comfort. When the family has withered away along with classes and the state, the communal upbringing that replaces it will lead to a new psychology and culture among the people that grow up in those conditions. Patriarchal social values—"my" wife, "my" children—will vanish along with the oppressive system that spawned them. The relationship of children to one another and to the persons who teach and guide them will be many-sided, complex and dynamic. It is the institution of the family that ties sex and love to property, with anything other than the straitjacket of heterosexual monogamy branded as "sin."

The family under capitalism is the main mechanism for the oppression of women and youth, tied with innumerable, interlocking threads to the basic operations of the "free market" economy. The family, the state and organized religion form a tripod of oppression propping up the capitalist order. In Third World countries, ingrained poverty and backwardness, promoted by imperialist domination, prescribe hideously oppressive practices like the veil, the bride price and female genital mutilation.

In advanced capitalist societies like the United States it may seem as if people's messy lives bear more resemblance to the TV shows *Modern Family* or *Transparent* than the 1950s sitcom *Father Knows Best*. However, people's personal choices are constricted by the laws, economics and prejudices of class society; this is especially true of the working class and the poor. Replacing the family with collective institutions is the most radical aspect of the communist program and will bring about the deepest, most sweeping changes in daily life, not least for children.

Our Left Opponents and the Anti-Sex Witchhunt

Today, that vision of a society without the oppressive institution of the family can no longer be found among the over-

The revolutionary tradition. From left: German Marxist August Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* (1879); Friedrich Engels' groundbreaking *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884); Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai's *Communism and the Family* (1920).

whelming majority of those who claim to stand for Marxism, socialism and the liberation of women. For the Stalinists, the anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country" meant the abandonment many decades ago of the understanding that a global socialist society was necessary to achieve full human liberation, including of women; one consequence was the Stalinist rehabilitation of the oppressive family as a "socialist" mainstay. In "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006), we addressed this subject in depth.

Other putative Marxists today, some claiming to be Trotskyists, simply follow prevailing liberal (bourgeois) feminist doctrine when addressing the question of women's liberation, implicitly upholding the institutions of the family and the capitalist state. A case in point is their loathing of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the ICL for our defense of the rights of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), which advocates the legalization of consensual sex between men and boys, and others persecuted for such sexual "deviancy." The ICL has consistently opposed government intervention into private life and demands an end to all laws against consensual "crimes without victims," e.g., prostitution, drug use and pornography.

The howls of many radicals and feminists against NAMBLA are an expression of the "family values" pushed by bourgeois politicians and pundits. For decades, a government-sponsored anti-sex backlash has taken many forms: anti-gay bigotry, a witchhunt against day-care workers, the banning of the distribution of birth control devices and information to teens as well as the jailing of "deviants." This reactionary onslaught was accompanied by such extra-legal terror as the bombing of abortion clinics. Much of this persecution aims to strengthen the bourgeois state in its regulation of the population and to spread panic as a diversion from the real brutality of life in this twisted, mean, bigoted, racist society.

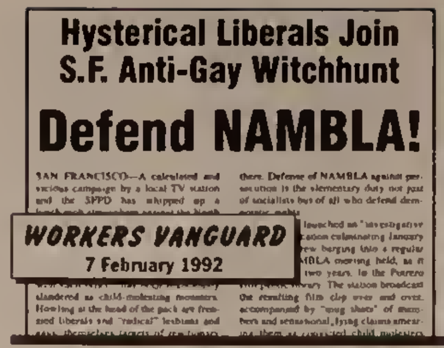
In past articles, we have explored some of the ambiguities of sexuality in a society where the deformities of class inequality and racial and sexual oppression can lead to a lot of personal pain and ugliness. We have stated that while the abuse of children is a vicious and horrible crime, many illegal sexual encounters are entirely consensual and devoid of harm per se. The willful conflation of everything from mutual fondling of siblings to the heinous rape of an infant by an adult creates a social climate of anti-sex hysteria in which the perpetrators of real violence against children often go free. We have pointed out that the sexual proclivities of a group-living mammalian species like *homo sapiens* are patently ill-suited to the rigid heterosexual monogamy decreed by bourgeois morality.

As a minimum measure of defense against state persecution of youth who want to have sex (or even just "sext"), we oppose reactionary "age of consent" laws through which the state decrees some arbitrary age when sex is deemed okay, never mind that the age determined by these laws changes through the years and differs from state to state. In addressing such questions, we have our eye firmly on opposition to the capitalist state in all its efforts to reinforce and uphold the exploitative bourgeois order. This is the application to today's conditions of our goal of full sexual freedom for all, including children and teenagers, in a communist future. This is particularly important for young adults, who today are expected to spend years after reaching puberty in the stranglehold of dependence on their parents. We call for full stipends for all students as part of our program for free, quality education for all, so that youth can be genuinely independent of their families.

In sharp contrast, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) refuses to call for the abolition of the existing age-of-consent laws. In an article titled "Youth, Sexuality and the Left," ISO honcho Sherry Wolf brandished her pitchfork at NAMBLA supporter David Thorstad for being "the most vocal long-time defender of pederasty on the left" (socialistworker.org, 2 March 2010). She quoted from her book *Sexuality and Socialism: History, Politics and Theory of LGBT Liberation* (Haymarket Books, 2009): "It is incompatible for genuine consent devoid of the inequality of power to be given by a child to a man of 30." Wolf's article continues: "Adults and children do not approach each other as emotional, physical, social or economic equals in our society. Children and young teens do not have the maturity, experience or power to make truly free decisions about their relationships with adults. Without those, there can be no genuine consent."

"Truly free decisions"? Most relationships between adults would not meet this standard for consent. Wolf is effectively handing over youth under 18 and their partners to the power of the bourgeois state. The only guideline for any sexual relationship should be that of ***effective*** consent—that is, mutual agreement and understanding by the parties involved—regardless of age, gender or sexual preference.

The ISO's abandonment of youth to the oppressive sexual status quo reflects its accommodation to the prejudices of the capitalist order and backward attitudes in the general population. Ultimately, this comes from the ISO's long-standing opposition to any perspective of the revolutionary mobilization of the working class to seize state power, create a workers state—the dictatorship of the proletariat—and open the road to a communist society. For the ISO, socialism is more or less the accumulated application of "democracy" to all sectors of the oppressed, the working class being seen as simply one more sector. The ISO seeks to pressure the capitalists to reform their exploitative order. Its perspective on women's liberation reflects the same touching faith in the forces of reform.


Hysterical Liberals Join S.F. Anti-Gay Witchhunt

Defend NAMBLA!

WORKERS VANGUARD

7 February 1992

SAN FRANCISCO—A calculated and vicious campaign by a local TV station and the SFPD has whipped up a ... there. Defense of NAMBLA against persecution is the elementary duty not just of socialists but of all who defend democratic rights.

WV Photo

Spartacists defend NAMBLA against state witchhunting and "family values" demagogues, including those on the left. Placard at 1978 gay rights demonstration in New York City (right).

Why Marxists Are Not Feminists

Interestingly, within the last few years the ISO has been engaged in a discussion in the pages of its newspaper, *Socialist Worker*, about theories of women's liberation. This appears to be motivated by a desire to desert the organization's previous position of opposition to feminism as a bourgeois ideology in favor of actively embracing the feminist or "socialist feminist" label. For example, in a talk at the ISO's 2013 Socialism conference (printed in "Marxism, Feminism and the Fight for Liberation," socialistworker.org, 10 July 2013), Abbie Bakan offered, "The theoretical claim that there is grounds for a coherent Marxist approach that is for 'women's liberation,' while against 'feminism,' makes no sense." (Until March of that year, Bakan was a prominent supporter of the Canadian International Socialists, political cousins of the ISO.)

The ISO's recent, explicit theoretical embrace of "socialist feminism" is simply a different cover for the same liberal content. However, it presents us with an opportunity to restate the long-standing Marxist position on the family and to emphasize that the emancipation of women is fundamental to and inseparable from socialist revolution. Contrary to feminist ideology, full legal equality cannot overcome women's oppression, which is deeply rooted in the family and private property.

As we have always emphasized, Marxism and feminism are long-standing political enemies. This requires some explanation. In the U.S. and elsewhere, it has become common to use the term "feminist" to describe the belief that men and women should be equal. But in addressing inequality, feminism accepts the confines of the existing capitalist society. Feminism as an ideology was born in the late 19th century, reflecting the aspirations of a layer of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women who wanted to claim their class prerogatives: property ownership and inheritance, access to education and the professions, and voting rights. Marxists seek far more than this limited idea of "gender equality."

Marxists recognize that the liberation of women cannot take place without the liberation of the entire human race from exploitation and oppression—and that is our goal. This was spelled out well over a century ago in *Woman Under Socialism* (1879), a Marxist classic by August Bebel, the venerable leader of the German Social Democratic Party. In various editions, this work was read by millions of workers for generations before World War I. Its rich vision of the emancipation of women is not to be found in any of the ISO's writings on the question:

> "She chooses her occupation on such field as corresponds with her wishes, inclinations and natural abilities, and she works under conditions identical with man's. Even if engaged as a practical working-woman on some field or other, at other times of the day she may be educator, teacher or nurse, at yet others she may exercise herself in art, or cultivate some branch of science, and at yet others may be filling some administrative function."
>
> —*Woman Under Socialism*, trans. Daniel De Leon (Schocken Books, 1971)

What is especially significant about Bebel's description of the self-fulfilling nature of work in a socialist society is that it applies equally to men. That points to the heart of why Marxism and feminism are mutually exclusive and indeed antagonistic. Feminists see the basic division in society as between men and women, while socialists recognize that male and female workers must fight together to end oppression and exploitation by the capitalist class.

AFP

Washington, D.C., 25 April: Three days before Supreme Court heard arguments on same-sex marriage, carnival of reaction outside promoted sanctity of the family.

Misrepresenting Marx

In its theoretical switch to "socialist feminism," the ISO is promoting Lise Vogel's *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (Haymarket Books, 2013). This book, originally published in 1983, was reissued as part of the Historical Materialism series

continued on page 6

Women and Revolution

Women and Revolution is now incorporated into *Spartacist*, the theoretical and documentary repository of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). *Women and Revolution*, which was published independently as the journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S. from Fall 1973 to Winter/Spring 1996, reflects our commitment to the fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution. Fully indexed clothbound volumes.

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Communism...

(continued from page 5)

with a laudatory introduction by two Canadian academics who are supporters of the ultra-reformist New Socialist Group. Even 30 years ago, the "socialist feminist" milieu that Vogel addressed had already dwindled to nothing. But because Vogel purports to represent a Marxist pole in the "social feminist" movement or intellectual current, it suits the ISO to champion her book today.

In the book's introductory section, Vogel differentiates herself evenhandedly from non-Marxist feminists and non-feminist Marxists. She sets as her main task to analyze the character of women's oppression within the structure and dynamics of the capitalist economic system. Her discussion of Marx and Engels is confused, contradictory and turgid. She primarily focuses on the relation between domestic or household labor and the generational reproduction of labor power. For Vogel, the oppression of women rests narrowly on women's (unpaid) household labor. Explicitly stating, "The category of 'the family'... is found to be wanting as an analytical starting point," she ignores the broader questions of the role of the family in the oppression of women and children and its importance as a key prop of the capitalist order. The family serves to *atomize* the working class, propagating bourgeois individualism as a barrier to class solidarity.

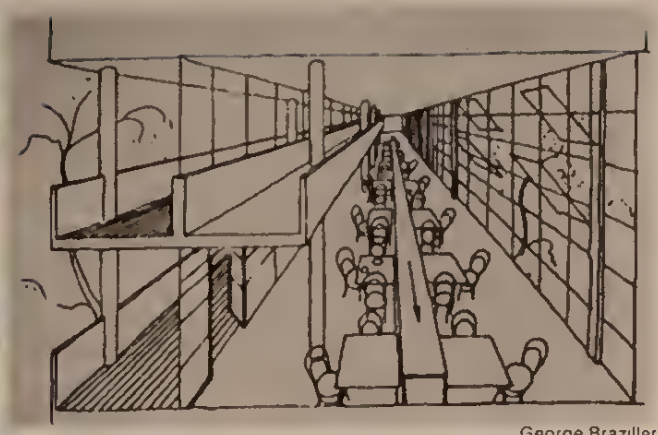
While presenting a narrow understanding of women's oppression, Vogel slanders Engels as an "economic determinist." She simply dismisses the cultural and social sides of Engels' rich arguments in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). To take one example, she complains that Engels "does not clearly link the development of a special sphere associated with the reproduction of labour power to the emergence of class-, or, perhaps, capitalist society." This seems to mean that Engels does not show how the emergence of class society came to bear on women's child rearing role. This is simply untrue.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels describes how the family originated in the Neolithic Age as society first split into classes. Relying on the information available at the time, Engels drew heavily from the pioneering work of Lewis Henry Morgan among the Iroquois in upstate New York for an understanding of early, pre-class society. Engels described how the invention of agriculture created a social surplus that allowed, for the first time, the development of a leisured ruling class that lived off the labor of others. The family, specifically the monogamy of women, was needed to ensure the orderly transmission of property and power to the patriarch's heirs, the next generation of the ruling class. While much more has become known of early stages of human society since Engels lived, his fundamental understanding has stood the test of time.

Vogel does not analyze the *social* role of the family for the working class under capitalism, where it is the means to raise the next generation of wage slaves. In *Capital*, Marx explained that the cost of labor power is determined by the cost of the maintenance and reproduction of the worker—his daily living expenses, his training and the maintenance of his wife and children. To boost profits, the capitalist seeks to drive down the cost of labor—not just the wages paid into the pockets of the workers but also services like public education and health care, which are necessary to the maintenance of the proletariat.

Feminists sometimes criticize aspects of the family, but usually only to complain about "gender roles," as if the problem were a lifestyle argument over who should do the dishes or feed the baby its bottle. It is the institution of the family that socializes people from infancy to behave according to certain norms, respect authority and develop the habits of obedience and deference so useful for capitalist profit-making. The family is invaluable to the bourgeoisie as a reservoir of small private property and in some cases petty production, serving as an ideological brake on social consciousness. Vogel ignores these questions and focuses strictly on women's unpaid "domestic labor."

Arkady Shaikhet



George Braziller

Left: Soviet childcare facility in the 1920s. Inset: Sketch of projected collective dining facilities in the Soviet Union, late 1920s.

The Ultimate Goal

Vogel's position is even weaker with respect to the ultimate goal of women's liberation. This is seen especially in what she *doesn't* say. Vogel divorces the emancipation of women from overcoming economic scarcity and from the replacement of alienated labor—in the factory as well as the household—by creative, self-satisfying work. Both the ultimate goal of a communist society and the basic means of achieving that goal lie outside the intellectual confines of Vogel's "socialist feminism."

When Marx and Engels explained that they subscribed to a materialist understanding of society and social change, they were not only referring to capitalism and earlier class-divided societies (e.g., feudalism). They also provided a materialist understanding of a future classless society. Indeed, that was their fundamental difference with the main socialist currents in the early 19th century—the Owenites, Fourierists and Saint-Simonians—as summarized in Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (originally part of his 1878 polemic, *Anti-Dühring*). Marx and Engels recognized that a socialist society—understood as the initial stage of communism—requires a level of ***labor productivity*** far higher than that in even the most economically advanced capitalist countries today. This is to be achieved through the ongoing expansion of scientific knowledge and its technological application.

Vogel has no such conception. This is especially evident in her discussion of early Soviet Russia. Expressing great appreciation for Lenin's understanding of and commitment to overcoming the oppression of women, she quotes with approval his 1919 speech, "The Tasks of the Working Women's Movement in the Soviet Republic":

> "You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain factually downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.
>
> "In pursuance of the socialist ideal we want to struggle for the full implementation of socialism, and here an extensive field of labour opens up before women. We are now making serious preparations to clear the ground for the building of socialism, but the building of socialism will begin only when we have achieved the complete equality of women and when we undertake the new work together with women who have been emancipated from that petty, stultifying, unproductive work."
>
> —*Collected Works*, Vol. 30

Central Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

Communist leader of Zhenotdel, Bolsheviks' commission for work among women, in Soviet Central Asia, 1924.

Vogel wrongly contends that Lenin's was a lone voice crying in the wilderness. She implies that the main obstacle to overcoming the oppression of women in early Soviet Russia was *ideological*: the pervasive patriarchal attitudes among working-class and peasant men, combined with the supposed indifference to women's liberation among the mainly male cadre of the Bolshevik party. Vogel writes:

> "Lenin's remarks about male chauvinism never acquired programmatic form, and the campaign against male ideological backwardness remained at most a minor theme in Bolshevik practice. Nonetheless, his observations on the problem represented an extremely rare acknowledgment of its seriousness.... Lenin's theoretical contributions failed to make a lasting impression."

In fact, enormous efforts were made by the Soviet government to relieve working-class women of the burden of housework and childcare through the establishment of communal kitchens, laundries, nurseries and the like. Both the Bolsheviks and the Communist International established special departments for work among women. In the early Soviet workers state, the *Zhenotdel* was active in both the European and Central Asian regions.

The limits to the liberating policies of the Communist government under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky were not ideological but the result of *objective conditions*: the poverty of material resources aggravated by years of imperialist war and civil war. Trotsky explained in a 1923 essay, "From the Old Family to the New," included in the 1924 compilation *Problems of Everyday Life* (a work that Vogel fails to mention):

> "The physical preparations for the conditions of the new life and the new family, again, cannot fundamentally be separated from the general work of socialist construction. The workers' state must become wealthier in order that it may be possible seriously to tackle the public education of children and the releasing of the family from the burden of the kitchen and the laundry. Socialization of family housekeeping and public education of children are unthinkable without a marked improvement in our economics as a whole. We need more socialist economic forms. Only under such conditions can we free the family from the functions and cares that now oppress and disintegrate it. Washing must be done by a public laundry, catering by a public restaurant, sewing by a public workshop. Children must be educated by good public teachers who have a real vocation for the work."
>
> —*Problems of Everyday Life*
> (Pathfinder Press, 1973)

Material scarcity was the source of yet another important area of inequality between men and women in early Soviet Russia (and by extension in any economically backward workers state). This was the scarcity of highly skilled labor requiring advanced knowledge and technical capacity. Skilled industrial workers and members of the technical intelligentsia (e.g., engineers, architects) had to be given higher wages than unskilled workers, although the difference was much less than in capitalist countries. This better-paid stratum of the labor force, inherited from the tiny modern capitalist sector of tsarist Russia, was predominantly male. Although efforts were made to rectify this, the early workers state lacked the material resources to educate and train women to become machinists and engineers in numbers sufficient to overcome male predominance in skilled labor.

Vogel concludes her book by offering a projection of the transition to communism following the overthrow of capitalism:

> "Confronted with the terrible reality of women's oppression, nineteenth-century utopian socialists called for the abolition of the family. Their drastic demand continues to find advocates among socialists even today. In its place, however, historical materialism poses the difficult question of simultaneously reducing and redistributing domestic labour in the course of transforming it into an integral component of social production in communist society. Just as in the socialist transition 'the state is not "abolished", ***it withers away***', so too, domestic labour must wither away. The proper management of domestic labour and women's work during the transition to communism is therefore a critical problem for socialist

MOVE...

(continued from page 3)

from people hiding in the "labyrinth of tunnels" around the house. No tunnels were found in the rubble....

The cops wanted to burn MOVE alive and they sat and watched for ***90 minutes*** while Osage Avenue was in flames. Firemen were ordered to cease the use of water cannon, which were (safely) positioned in the next street. Jerry Africa, a spokesman for MOVE, reported that commune members tried to surrender after the bombing and ensuing fire, but "panicked and ran back into their burning building when police fired shots over their heads" *(Chicago Tribune*, 22 May). As cars melted from the heat blocks away, and the fire spread through 60 homes, Goode waited until every last man, woman and child in the MOVE house was burned alive, most apparently huddled in the basement....

Reagan's "Anti-Terrorism" Means War on Blacks

The eviction operation was "perfect, except for the fire," said Goode. The mayor says that approximately 20 minutes before the cops dropped it, they told him they were going to use a "percussion explosive" to blow a hole in the bunker on the roof. Still, Goode insists he takes

August 1978 siege of MOVE's Powelton Village home, where hundreds of Philadelphia cops launched vicious assault against MOVE members.

"full responsibility" for the bombing; that is, he'd rather be seen as a mass murderer than a chump. What emerges is a picture of a conscious, planned operation designed to make sure that nobody got out of that house alive. Here America's racist rulers take a page from their terrorist murder manuals for the CIA "contras" in Nicaragua, who as guard dogs of the Somoza dictatorship mercilessly bombed their own cities. From the crazed anti-Soviet crusaders in the White House bunker, the message is: ***West Philly was perfect***. It was their program for black America. And their black flunkeys in City Hall do the dirty work.

From Goode's diatribes against "urban guerrillas" to Meese's congratulations, what happened on Osage Avenue has all the earmarks of a COINTELPRO-type operation straight out of Washington. Last issue we asked, "Where is the hand of Edwin Meese...in this affair?" Turns out he was pulling the strings. As the *New York Times* (19 May) reported, "Mr. Samhor said he and his aides met on Saturday, May 11, with local agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to review the strategy and tactics to be used. 'The F.B.I. found the plan sound,' Mr. Sambor said." And City Council member Lucien Blackwell commented:

> "I think the mayor sat down with all the responsible parties, the district councilman, the district senator, the district state representative, the district attorney, FBI agents, the secret service, the managing director, the city solicitor, to make out a plan pursuing this very serious city problem.... I believe a lot of planning went into that decision."
>
> —*Daily Pennsylvanian*, 17 May

The Osage Avenue massacre was no aberration. From the Los Angeles Police Department's "Blue Thunder" attack helicopters and battering-ram tanks to New York's stun-gun "torture precincts," the rulers justify the growing paramilitarization of the cops in the name of "war on terrorism." To regiment the American people for nuclear Armageddon with the Soviet Union, Reagan and Meese have created a "terrorism" scare in order to institute real "state-supported terrorism" at home. This includes sweeping police state measures like the new FBI Security/Terrorism Guidelines which label all opponents of the government outlaws to be shot down in the dead of night; and the "shoot first" National Security Directive 138 which unleashes U.S. military and intelligence forces to carry out unprovoked "strikes" against "terrorist" targets. There are also the police state military "exercises," such as the martial law atmosphere surrounding last year's Democratic National Convention in San Francisco and the "free world" Olympics in Los Angeles.

New York City, July 1985: MOVE supporters LaVerne Sims (at mic) and Louise James at Spartacist forum held in solidarity with MOVE martyrs.

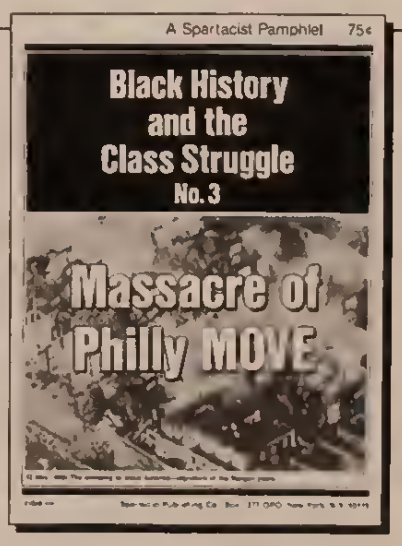
As for Wilson Goode, one high-schooler remarked, "What kind of mayor would do something that would kill children and burn down the houses of people that voted for him?" LaVerne Africa knows what kind: "You know, he is worse than [former police chief and then mayor Frank] Rizzo? Rizzo hated MOVE and never tried to pretend he didn't.... We knew Rizzo wouldn't dare to bomb MOVE. We didn't know Wilson Goode.... You know, people defend him—because he's black.... Had that been a white mayor they would've been outraged." That's right, Wilson Goode is in there to do what notorious racist Rizzo never could. (His 1978 assault on MOVE where 600 cops moved in, again without any legal pretext of criminal charges, evoked widespread sympathy for the group—nine MOVE members are still in jail for defending themselves against the cops.) Now with hundreds of people burned out of their homes, the mayor is talking in penny-ante terms about money to rebuild, while Pennsylvania Republican governor Thornburgh refuses to declare the fire-ravaged blocks a disaster area. Homes it took a lifetime to pay for have been wiped out—the government should give each displaced family ***a million bucks*** just for openers!

Before he allowed his own city to be bombed, Mayor Wilson Goode was touted as one of the premier black Democrats of the 1980s. He even rated a meeting with Walter Mondale last year, as a possible vice presidential candidate. From ex-cop "Uncle" Tom Bradley in Los Angeles, to ex-SNCC leader Marion Barry in Washington, D.C., black Democratic mayors preside over the misery and oppression that is the reality of life in black America. The poverty program pork barrels are long gone—today the black mayors campaign for Reagan's program of a sub-minimum wage for teenagers. And where there are strikes to be broken, protests over killer cops to be quashed, or the KKK wants its "right" to do some provocative nightriding in the heart of the black inner cities, it's these black front men for Reagan racism who get the job.

We communists say black Democrat Wilson Goode is as guilty as Republican Ronald Reagan and the racist cops for the murder of eleven blacks, women and children alike. The liberals now apologize for this calculated obliteration of a black neighborhood—to do otherwise requires a break from the whole myth of the "new black power" at the voting booth, organized through the Democratic Party of George Wallace and Jesse Jackson. That is why we are now witnessing the obscene spectacle of the black establishment supporting Goode amid the screams of black babies. Harlem's *Amsterdam News* (25 May) headlined, "MOVE was White Man's Idea," talking of MOVE's "confrontations...with the law" (a hunger strike!); and the *City Sun* (22-28 May) calls Goode "The Man in the Middle."

It's not only cynical Democratic Party vote hustlers like Jesse Jackson who have maintained a deafening silence or rallied to the side of Wilson Goode. The groveling reformists of the Communist Party call for "a federal investigation" into the firebombing—that is, for the criminal Edwin Meese to investigate the crime! Demanding the resignations of police chief Sambor, city manager Brooks, and fire chief Richmond, they let Mayor Wilson "I'd do it again" Goode off the hook. Progressive Labor was one of the few groups not blinded by loyalty to black Democrats. But while calling a protest against Goode's massacre May 18, these stupid sectarians kept it a private affair, refusing a united front offer from the Spartacist League. The SL initiated and led the Labor/Black Mobilization which brought out 5,000 people and stopped the KKK from marching in the nation's capital on 27 November 1982, an anti-racist victory which stands in sharp contrast to the defeats and sellouts which black people have endured in recent years. As in Washington, PL prefers waving flags on the sidelines to leading genuine mass struggle in this country.

The Osage Avenue massacre was supposed to be a message to anybody who gets "out of line" in Reagan's America—blacks will get the Philly treatment, labor will get the PATCO treatment, and everyone, not least the Marxists, will get the "terrorist" treatment. But you can fight the terrorists in City Hall and the White House and win. Black people do have social power: they are concentrated in some of the key sections of the American proletariat, constituting its most militant layer. But to unlock this power means breaking the capitalist two-party stranglehold, fighting for a workers party to mobilize labor and oppressed blacks in revolutionary struggle against this racist, capitalist system. Avenge the Philly inferno—For black freedom through socialist revolution! ■



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society, for only on this basis can the economic, political, and ideological conditions for women's true liberation be established and maintained. In the process, the family in its particular historical form as a kin-based social unit for the reproduction of exploitable labour-power in class-society will also wither away—and with it both patriarchal family-relations and the oppression of women." [emphasis in original]

But how is this reduction and redistribution of domestic labor to be achieved? In the transition from the dictatorship of the proletariat to full communism, the transformation of the family is a corollary to expanded production and greater abundance. Its withering away, or disintegration, grows out of economic success. In the process, it will be replaced by new ways of living that will be immeasurably richer, more human and fulfilling. There may well be a need to develop some rules in the course of this transformation as people search for new modes of living. In the transitional period, it will be the job of the workers' democratic collective, the Soviet, to build alternatives and to guide the process.

Vogel does not pose the crucial question: If women are to be liberated from household drudgery, what then are they liberated to do? Will a reduction in the time spent on housework be offset by a comparable increase in the time spent at work—two fewer hours a day washing clothes and mopping floors, two more hours working on a factory assembly line? That's certainly not the Marxist idea of women's liberation.

The replacement of housework and child rearing by collective institutions are aspects of a fundamental change in the relation between production and labor time. Under a planned, socialist economy, all kinds of economic activity—from making steel and computers to cleaning clothes, floors and furniture—will undergo a constant, rapid increase in output per unit of labor input. Long before a communist society is attained, most housework may well be automated. More generally, there will be a steady reduction in the ***total labor time*** necessary for the production and maintenance of the means of consumption as well as the means of production.

In a fully communist society, most time will be what is now called "free time." Necessary labor will absorb such a small share of time and energy that the individual will freely grant it to the social collective. Everyone will have the available time along with the requisite material and cultural resources to engage in creative, self-satisfying work. In the *Grundrisse* (1857), Marx cited composing music as an example of genuinely free labor.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Syriza...

(continued from page 12)

Thus, the battle to overthrow capitalism is not a battle between a revolutionary "people" and the monopolies, but between the two fundamental, antagonistic classes under capitalism: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must seek to win oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie to its side in this battle. But it can only do so by fighting for a revolutionary solution to the capitalist crisis, by showing that only with the working class in power and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie can the oppression of the masses end.

Trotskyist Group of Greece

Banner hanging from the Workers Center of Thessaloniki declares "No to Bulgarian Coca-Cola." Such chauvinism serves to divide workers of Greece from workers of neighboring countries.

Reformist Left Joins Orgy of "National Unity"

The Troika has so far blocked Syriza's plan to give some crumbs to working people in order to stabilize the capitalist order in Greece. So Syriza has had to resort more and more to the ideology of nationalism to line up working people behind the Greek bourgeoisie. Nationalism is a bourgeois ideology maintaining the lie that workers have a shared national interest with their own capitalist rulers. Syriza pushes this poison. Not only did it give the anti-immigrant, anti-Jewish and anti-gay Independent Greeks (ANEL) the defense ministry, but from its first days in power the new government made a big point of demonstrating its nationalist hatred against Turkey—with [Minister of Defense Panos] Kammenos' Imia [disputed islets off the Turkish coast] trip and [Prime Minister Alexis] Tsipras' visit to Cyprus to denounce Turkish "provocations."

Syriza's pledge to remain in the EU was also a pledge to continue policing the borders of racist "Fortress Europe" and to keep out the desperate victims of imperialist starvation and war who risk their lives to come here from Asia, the Near East and Africa. Syriza's pretensions that it would help relieve the plight of immigrants are completely exposed by its continuation of anti-immigrant police raids and collaboration with imperialist agencies like Frontex [EU border control agency]. The working class must fight against the Greek bourgeoisie's efforts to divide and rule by scapegoating immigrants. We say: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!***

Far from opposing the government's "national unity" campaign to save Greek capitalism, much of the left has flocked to *pro-government* demonstrations, such as the one that took place on February 11 in Syntagma [Square, Athens]. Under slogans that echoed Tsipras' speeches in parliament, such as "We will not be blackmailed!", thousands gathered in demonstrations filled with Greek flags to show the imperialists that the Greek "people" supported the government in its negotiations with the Troika. But Greece's negotiations with the Troika are about *maintaining* the imperialist subordination of Greece, not ending it. Syriza just wants to renegotiate the terms of oppression.

Antarsya made its illusions in Syriza's government clear in its call for people to join the protests on February 11: "The government must immediately meet the demands of the mass movement." Also joining the orgy of "national unity" with Syriza, the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK) saluted the pro-government protests in February as "a proud militant response to the capitalist Troika" ("No to Imperialist Thieves' Blackmail!" *New Perspective*, 15 February). The EEK falsely claims the heritage of Trotsky's Fourth International, which from its founding stood in ***opposition*** to "popular front" alliances between workers parties and bourgeois forces. But a popular front is exactly what the EEK called for when it demanded that the bourgeois Syriza form a government together with the KKE, a reformist workers party ("The Greek People Has Shaken the World," 3 February).

The KKE did not participate in this orgy of national unity and opposed the coalition government's "national concord" demonstrations. But when it comes to the defense of capitalist Greece's borders, even with a far-right Minister of National Defense in power, the KKE puts its rhetoric against national unity back into its Stalinist closet. In its 8 March *Rizospastis*, the KKE complains that the government is weakening Greece's national interests against Turkey ("The Turkish Notification (NOTAM) and the Government"). This is poison for the consciousness of the working class and does nothing other than deflect the anger and the desperation of the working masses away from the real enemy, the Greek bourgeoisie, and toward the workers of neighboring countries like Turkey.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

The Syriza government has ratcheted up the campaign begging the German bourgeoisie of Auschwitz to pay billions in reparations for the horrors inflicted on the population of Greece under Nazi occupation. The Greek bourgeoisie uses this campaign to whip up nationalist hostility among Greeks against all Germans. We oppose the lie that the German "people" are collectively responsible for the crimes of the German imperialists. Germany is a class-divided society in which the capitalist rulers exploit and oppress their "own" working people, as capitalist rulers do everywhere.

For the Greek bourgeoisie to call for reparations is pure hypocrisy. A large section of the bourgeoisie collaborated with the Nazi occupiers while the other wing of the bourgeoisie allied with the "democratic" British and U.S. imperialists who butchered the revolutionary worker and peasant masses of Greece, including by using the fascist security battalions. Syriza's campaign is a nationalist maneuver to divert attention from the bankruptcy of their "anti-austerity" politics and has nothing to do with real justice for the victims of imperialist war crimes. Such crimes include not only massacres like those in [the Greek villages of] Distomo and Kalavryta, but also the Holocaust in which most of Greece's Jewish population was wiped out. The victims of forced labor and the families of those massacred should of course receive any financial compensation they claim.

Workers in Germany have also seen their wages slashed and living conditions undercut in the name of profitability in recent years and a staggering 12.5 million people are classified as poor there. It is toward the working class of imperialist countries like Germany that the Greek workers must look for allies in the struggle against the imperialist EU and all the exploiters. As our comrades in Germany wrote: "Class struggle in Germany as well as France in solidarity with Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers would not only broaden their struggles against austerity but also would help workers throughout Europe to free themselves from nationalism and break from their own bourgeoisies" ("Economic Crisis Rips Europe," *WV* No. 992, 9 December 2011).

To the degree that organizations on the left here call for Greece to get out of the euro zone and EU, it is from a nationalist and reformist perspective. If Greece were to exit the EU as the result of militant workers struggles, this would be an important step forward, allowing Greece to devalue its currency and helping to shake up the imperialist order in Europe. But this is not a solution in itself. As a small country, with a low level of industry and resources, Greece will always remain dependent on imperialism under capitalism. Furthermore, the economic crisis Greece is suffering is part of a worldwide economic crisis of the imperialist system. The only way out for workers and the oppressed is the struggle for socialist revolution here and internationally, including in the imperialist centers. ***For a Socialist United States of Europe!***

The KKE's call for Greece out of the EU is based *not* on internationalism, but nationalism. In opposition to a revolutionary internationalist perspective, the KKE maintains: "In Greece there exist the material conditions for socialist construction" and that such "can safeguard the satisfaction of the people's needs" ("Programme of the KKE," 19th Congress, April 2013). For Marxists, socialism means a society of material abundance premised on the collectivization and qualitative development of the most advanced productive forces, which are today centered in the imperialist countries. As Engels wrote in his "Principles of Communism" (1847):

> "*Question 19*: Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?
>
> "*Answer*: No. Large-scale industry, already by creating the world market, has so linked up all the peoples of the earth, and especially the civilised peoples, that each people is dependent on what happens to another.... The communist revolution will therefore be no merely national one.... It is a worldwide revolution and will therefore be worldwide in scope."

The KKE's program thus rejects a fundamental premise of Marxism.

For Mass, Proletarian Mobilizations to Stop the Fascists!

By promoting reactionary Greek nationalism, Syriza and the reformists are reinforcing the ideology that nourishes the fascists. Anyone with eyes can see that the [fascist] Golden Dawn and other right-wing forces are preparing for Syriza's failure in order to step in and be the "saviors" of the nation from the EU and from its destruction by the "left."

If the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed do not see the working class fighting for a program of radical demands to end mass unemployment and poverty, they will be increasingly attracted to the "radical" solutions offered by the fascists. The fascists divert the indignation and despair of the petty bourgeoisie away from big capital and exploit the masses' disgust with the parliamentary politics of the "left." As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky wrote in the 1930s when the fascists were on the rise in France: "Big capital ruins the middle classes and then with the help of hired fascist demagogues incites the despairing petty bourgeois against the worker." (*Whither France?*, October 1934).

This underscores the urgency for the organized workers movement to fight to stop the fascist menace before it gets any larger. Despite its anti-fascist rhetoric, the Greek left is in practice politically ***disarming*** the workers and oppressed in the fight against fascism. For example, you have the criminal passivity of the trade-union misleaders, including the KKE's PAME union front, in response to the fascists. The historic purpose of the fascists is to destroy the organized workers movement and suppress politi-

Sipa

Athens, 31 January: Fascist Golden Dawn forces commemorate Greek military officers who died in 1996 over dispute with Turkey about Imia islets.

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cal liberties when the capitalists can no longer govern with the help of the "democratic" machinery of the state. Tens and hundreds of thousands of workers are regularly mobilized in the streets by the unions and PAME for all kinds of demonstrations. Yet this social power is *not* mobilized when it counts the most—to prevent the much smaller forces of the Golden Dawn from holding their mass rallies, which serve to give the fascists the confidence to carry out bloody attacks on immigrants, leftists and gay people.

A massive, united-front show of force by the workers who have the power to shut down the capitalist flow of profits would not only send the fascists back into their holes, but would also give the workers a sense of their own power. In this way, the proletariat can demonstrate in action that it has confidence and can win over sections of the oppressed petty bourgeoisie to its side. Thousands of workers must also be organized through their unions into defense guards to protect the victims of the fascist gangs in the neighborhoods. The workers united front poses the fact that the struggle is not about "democracy" vs. fascism, but class against class. It provides a vehicle for revolutionaries to fight for leadership of the working class in struggle, and must therefore be based on the principle explained by Lenin: "March separately but *strike together*." This means revolutionaries continue their polemical struggle to expose the reformists and trade-union misleaders from within the united front.

The central obstacle to a powerful, united-front struggle against the fascists is the profound illusions promoted by the left in the "democratic" capitalist state. The most explicit in promoting these illusions is the Socialist Workers Party (SEK) and its Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat (KEERFA), who relentlessly call for "prison for the neo-Nazi murderers." The SEK even calls on the minister who oversees the police to "clear away the Golden Dawn enclaves that exist inside the police" (*Workers' Solidarity*, 11 March). These are calls on the same capitalist system that gave birth to the fascists to stop them. As Trotsky wrote in opposition to such reformist illusions in the state:

> "Suppose the police of Daladier-Frossard [French Radical and Socialist Party leaders] 'disarm the fascists.' Does that settle the question? And who will disarm the same police, who with the right hand will give back to the fascists what they will have taken from them with the left? The comedy of disarmament by the police will only have caused the authority of the fascists to increase as fighters against the capitalist state."
>
> —*Whither France?*

The SEK and Antarsya may talk about building a "united front" but what they mean is a class-collaborationist movement *with* the bourgeois Syriza. While a mass, working-class united front must include all anti-fascist workers, including those who still support Syriza, PASOK or other bourgeois parties, we do *not* call on these parties to join the struggle against fascism. This is because we understand that fascism is an outgrowth of the capitalist system itself and that calls on the capitalists to stop the fascists can only serve to divert workers from revolutionary struggle. The united front is a tactic for carrying out a common action around specific concrete demands—such as stopping a fascist provocation—and not an ongoing political bloc of the kind the SEK and Antarsya build.

VAAP

Russian factory workers at Petrograd May Day demonstration in 1917 carried Bolshevik slogans, among them "Long Live Socialism" and "Long Live the Third International!"

Not "People's Power" but Workers Power!

One justification for the KKE's passivity in response to the fascists is the argument that the "only road to abolish fascism" is socialist revolution, which is true. But does this mean workers don't have to defend themselves and the oppressed until then? Aren't unemployment, women's oppression and racism also inherent to capitalism? Should the workers not fight against these in the here and now? Should the workers allow themselves to be slaughtered by the fascists? Who will then lead the socialist revolution? The struggle against fascism today must necessarily he linked to the struggle to eliminate fascism once and for all through the overthrow of capitalism. The KKE's refusal to fight to defend the workers movement against the fascist threat demonstrates that their program is *not* to organize the workers for a revolutionary seizure of power.

The KKE might say it is for "isolating" the fascists ideologically, but when they appeal to a national interest of the people, they echo the populism of the right: "Men and women of the Military and Security Forces, we call you to support the KKE, for the interest of the people, for the interest of our country" (KKE statement of April 2014 about the European elections). Didn't the *Communist Manifesto* declare: "*The workingmen have no country*" [emphasis added]? The KKE's nationalist appeals to the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state have nothing in common with Marxism or Leninism. The KKE's *Communist Review* No. 1 (2015) contains a long article on the "bourgeois state and government" in which they endlessly quote Lenin on the oppressive nature of the state and the need to overthrow it. But these words are exposed by the KKE's deeds. Didn't the KKE run as an election candidate Giannis Douniadakis, a former admiral of the Greek navy and member of the Movement for National Defense (KETHA), which fights for "the patriotic orientation of the armed forces" of capitalist Greece? And hasn't the KKE repeatedly sent delegations to show solidarity with reactionary police organizations falsely called "unions"?

Trotskyist Group of Greece

Piraeus, January 11: Rally for KKE's 96th anniversary sports Greek national flags along with KKE flags.

Cops are not part of the workers movement. They are the hired thugs of the capitalist state, and their role is not to "protect the citizen" but to keep the bourgeoisie safe from the struggles of the proletariat. Their role is to arrest and torture immigrants, to smash picket lines, to break strikes together with scabs hired by the big and small capitalists and to defend their private property, and to suppress campus protests. This was seen on April 17 with the arrests of anarchists at the University of Athens, under the orders of Tsipras. *Hands off the anarchist protesters!* A prime example of the strike-breaking role of the cops was shown by their attack on the months-long strike at the steel factory in Aspropyrgos. Yet the KKE leadership has no problem offering its "solidarity" to the police organizations whose cops broke this strike—a strike in which PAME was part of the leadership! *Cops, prison and security guards out of the unions!*

What is really behind the KKE's talk of "people" vs. "monopolies" is an accommodation to "small capital" vs. "big capital." Greece has a very small industrial proletariat and correspondingly large urban petty bourgeoisie. The Greek private sector overwhelmingly consists of small enterprises, in which workers are largely not unionized. Revolutionaries should fight to win the unions to a massive campaign to organize these workers and overturn the law barring the formation of a union in workplaces of less than 21 employees. But the KKE in its "For the Self-Employed, Small Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants—Theses of the Central Committee of the KKE" says that the party needs to organize the "self-employed with personnel," i.e., the exploiters of these workers! This political orientation to the small exploiter is a concrete example of how the KKE dissolves the working class into the "people."

Where the real social power for a revolutionary transformation rests in Greece is not in a broad front of the people as the KKE maintains, but in the small but militant proletariat, i.e., seamen, longshoremen, mass transit and rail workers, miners and electrical workers. This is the class that has the power to shut down production, stop the flow of profits, seize the means of production and overthrow the bourgeoisie. The relative weakness of the Greek proletariat, due to its small size, underscores the necessity to look for allies outside the country. A workers revolution in Greece would inspire support from the powerful proletariat of larger countries from Turkey to Spain to Germany.

It was the working class, and not the "people" who took power in Russia in October 1917. It was a proletarian revolution that established the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the mass of oppressed peasants, not "people's power." Lenin argued in "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" (10 April 1917), for "pouring of vinegar and bile into the sweet water of revolutionary-democratic phraseology," "preparing and welding the elements of a *consciously* proletarian, Communist Party" and "*curing* the proletariat of the 'general' petty-bourgeois intoxication." It was with such a sharp, independent class program that Lenin and Trotsky led the proletariat to power. This is the opposite of what the KKE leadership did in the 1940s in Greece when it betrayed a revolution by subordinating the workers to the Stalinist alliance with the "democratic" imperialists in World War II (see "Greece 1940s: A Revolution Betrayed," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 64, Summer 2014).

We in the ICL, genuine Leninist-Trotskyists, fought to defend the gains of the October Revolution until the end despite the Soviet Union's degeneration under Stalinism. We unconditionally defended the Soviet Union against the forces of internal and external capitalist counterrevolution. We *uniquely* fought on the ground in 1989-90 in the deformed workers state of East Germany, and in 1991-92 in the Soviet Union, to stop the unfolding of capitalist counterrevolution. We called for workers political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy as well as for the extension of revolution internationally. The KKE, in contrast,

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Baltimore...

(continued from page 1)

decades ago, not least the installation of "black faces in high places." In the wake of the unrest, Baltimore's black Democratic mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake launched a public-private partnership for urban renewal, which she called a "once-in-a-generation effort to tackle inequality." Anti-poverty programs were introduced in various cities more than a generation ago in response to the ghetto rebellions that erupted between 1964 and 1968. Once the turmoil was quelled, these programs were cut way back; meanwhile, black people continued to bear the brunt of the normal brutal workings of the capitalist system. By the end of that decade, a racist backlash had already begun.

Baltimore was among the many cities across the country that exploded in 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Some 3,000 U.S. Army soldiers and almost the entire Maryland National Guard were dispatched to suppress the uprising. Over 5,000 people were arrested and hundreds injured. Afterwards, there was an acceleration of "white flight" from the city, which had begun a decade earlier with school desegregation.

The ghetto upheavals of the 1960s, more often than not sparked by incidents of police violence, marked the end of the civil rights movement, which had raised great hopes and engendered enormous activism but had proven incapable of meaningfully altering the fundamental plight of black people. The mass struggles of the civil rights movement put an end to the system of Jim Crow segregation in the South, but the movement broke apart when confronted with the de facto segregation in the Northern ghettos, where black people already had formal legal equality. The liberal pacifism and legalism of the civil rights movement were unable to challenge the systemic oppression of black people that is at the heart of American capitalism, expressed in racist cop terror, chronic unemployment, decrepit housing, crumbling schools, poverty and hunger.

From the formation of the Spartacist tendency in the early 1960s, we have advanced a program of ***revolutionary integrationism***—the fight for the assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist society, which is the only way to achieve real equality. As one of our early documents laid out:

> "Any organization which claims a revolutionary perspective for the United States must confront the *special oppression* of black people—the forced segregation of blacks at the bottom of capitalist society and the poisonous racism which divides the working class and cripples its struggles. There will be no social revolution in this country without the united struggle of black and white workers led by their multiracial vanguard party. Moreover, there is no other road to eliminating the special oppression of black people than the victorious conquest of power by the U.S. proletariat."
>
> —Preface, *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised) (1978)

This perspective is sharply counterposed to liberal integrationism—which is based upon the deception that black freedom can be achieved within the confines of the racist capitalist system—and also to black nationalism—which rejects and despairs of integrated class struggle.

The 1960s riots came in a period of broader social ferment, from the battles against racial segregation to growing opposition to the Vietnam War. At the time, the government not only unleashed murderous repression but also co-opted a layer of black activists into helping administer "war on poverty" programs to re-establish control over the rebellious ghettos. Some of them were installed as big-city mayors and in other elected offices. As we noted back in 1966:

> "Black Democrats sitting in Congress or on some city council cannot change the conditions of the masses of people. These black Democrats enrich only themselves as agents of [then-President Lyndon] Johnson's party. As long as they can prolong the illusion that the masses can use the Democratic Party to change their conditions, they can deliver the vote from the ghettoes. But such Democrats always desert the masses at critical points, as did the Negro councilman in Cleveland who called for the National Guard to suppress the people of Hough. The role of a political party is to gain and maintain state power for a particular class."
>
> —"Storms in the Ghetto," *Spartacist* No. 7, September-October 1966

The Democrats, no less than the Republicans, are a party of the capitalist class. There are plenty of black Democrats in office today, from Baltimore's mayor, police commissioner and state's attorney, right up to Attorney General Loretta Lynch, her predecessor Eric Holder and President Barack Obama. And what good has it done black workers and the poor? By almost every measure, things are worse today than they were at the end of the 1960s. There are vastly greater numbers of black people in prison and vastly fewer numbers of decent-paying jobs. What is needed to lead a struggle against the ravages of racist U.S. capitalism is a party of the multiracial working class, one committed to the fight for a workers America.

During the recent unrest in Baltimore, black Democrats joined outright racists and the capitalist media in vilifying black youth for "looting." This is rich given that it is the capitalists themselves who have looted and destroyed the city. "They want to act like the CVS is the Taj Mahal. They have dilapidated buildings everywhere," said one resident.

In the 1950s and '60s, the Mid-Atlantic seaport of Baltimore was a center of steel and auto production as well as shipbuilding. Good union jobs were available that provided something approaching a decent life for some black as well as white workers. Even then, black people were the "last hired, first fired" and often worked the most physically demanding and dangerous jobs, including in the unionized plants. But when the declining competitiveness of American industry became unmistakable in the 1970s, the U.S. capitalists started to shutter factories and move their investments elsewhere in a bid to maintain profits. Black workers in the main became the "first fired, never rehired."

The Bethlehem Steel mill at Sparrows

WV Photo

Spartacist League banner at Oakland May Day march.

Syriza...

(continued from page 9)

backed Gorbachev, supporting his economic reforms which opened the road to capitalism. In a lame self-criticism, the KKE admits: "The Conference of 1995 criticised the fact that our party uncritically accepted the policy of perestroika, assessing it as a reform policy which would benefit socialism" ("Resolution on Socialism," 18th Congress, February 2009). Contrary to the KKE's claim that it carries the flag of Red October, what it actually carries is the rotten banner of Stalinism, which dug the grave of the October Revolution.

The Fight for a Revolutionary Leadership

One of the recent issues of the KKE's theoretical journal contains a polemic against the Workers Struggle (EA) and New Seed (NS) groupings that dishonestly associates the Trotskyist Fourth International's 1938 founding document, popularly known as the Transitional Program, with its distortion by reformists. The KKE argues: "All the Transitional Programs are based on the direct or indirect acceptance of the position that the workers movement can—under conditions—to a decisive degree enforce its will on capitalist rule in the framework of capitalism, without the overthrow of the bourgeois state and without the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (*Communist Review* No. 1). In fact, the Transitional Program clearly states: "The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism, but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie." It is a cheap trick to smear Trotsky, who led the October Revolution together with Lenin, by citing the reformist politics of groups like EA, NS and Antarsya. The Transitional Program was formulated during the Great Depression and on the eve of WWII, and laid out "***transitional demands***, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." This was in opposition to both the social-democratic illusions in a peaceful reform of capitalism and to the Stalinists' popular-front alliances with bourgeois parties. The KKE rejects transitional demands because its program is reformist and it therefore does not need a "bridge" between its minimal demands like "restoring legally the minimum wage to at least 751 euros for all" and the fight for socialist revolution.

What is urgently needed today is not just to restore wages and conditions to pre-Memorandum levels but transitional demands which by their very nature cannot be met by a bourgeois society in crisis. In response to massive unemployment, especially among the youth, we demand ***jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay!*** In a society where the minimum wage leaves the working poor to burn firewood for heat and send their children hungry to school we demand a sliding scale of wages to keep up with the actual cost of living. If these demands are "unrealistic" for the bourgeoisie, then it shows to the masses that the whole system of capitalist slavery should be overthrown.

In the struggle to defend all those ruined by the capitalist crisis, the working class must fight to organize the many unorganized workers into the unions and to defend immigrant workers, who are a vital component of the urban and rural proletariat. In opposition to Syriza's begging for crumbs from the imperialists, we say: ***Repudiate the debt! Expropriate the banks!*** These demands provide the basis for the systematic mobilization of the masses for proletarian revolution.

The main obstacle to bringing the working class to revolutionary consciousness is not the "objective" conditions, but the opportunist character of the existing leadership of the workers movement, and in particular the KKE. What is needed is a revolutionary party like Lenin's and Trotsky's Bolsheviks. Such a party will lead the working class based on an understanding of who the real class enemy is and will act as a Leninist ***tribune of the people***, reacting against any manifestation of exploitation and oppression. It will be forged through the struggle against capitalist ruin and fascist reaction. Such a party cannot be a "national" party, but must form part of one international revolutionary party, with sections in each country. As our Trotskyist forebears wrote in 1934: "As yesterday, so today, we shall continue to work with all our strength for all the fundamental theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which have been tested through and through and confirmed a thousand times over and from every angle" ("For the Fourth International!" *New International*). It is the perspective of the TGG to fight for such a party as part of a reforged Fourth International. ■

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Point was at one time the hub of manufacturing in Baltimore. In the late 1950s, Sparrows Point was the most productive steel mill in the world and employed 30,000 at its peak. Major layoffs began in 1971, although 17,000 workers remained as late as 1979. Subsequently, full-scale deindustrialization set in. The half dozen shipyards in the early 1970s were down to only one by 1993, which later went bankrupt. The General Motors plant shut down in 2005. By 2012, there were 160,000 fewer manufacturing jobs in the Baltimore area than in 1957. The devastation of Baltimore is a tale familiar in many other cities across the country where low-wage jobs, often temporary or part-time, are increasingly the norm.

The looting of industry in this country was also a cudgel for the capitalists to wrest massive givebacks from the unions in a one-sided, now decades-long class war. All along, union members have been repeatedly stabbed in the back by the pro-capitalist labor misleaders, who have subordinated the interests of labor to company profitability. The end result is that the unions have been severely crippled, while pay and working conditions of American workers have been driven down across the board. To turn the tide will require some sharp class battles, out of which a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions must be forged.

This war on labor has gone along with an earlier and ongoing assault on the gains of the civil rights struggles, from busing for school integration to voting rights. With jobs for black youth all but dried up, the capitalist rulers have written off the ghettos, slashing social services and education to the bone while building up the prisons. As victims of the hard lines of racial segregation in Baltimore and across the country, those black people with jobs were largely fleeced of their personal assets. Locked out of traditional mortgages and forced into predatory subprime borrowing, large numbers were thrown onto the streets when the housing bubble burst in 2007.

Freddie Gray's neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester, where 50 percent of people of working age are unemployed and over a quarter of the buildings are vacant, has the highest number of people in jail and prison of any census tract in Maryland. Between 2005 and 2009, fully a quarter of juveniles in that neighborhood had been arrested. At any given point, over half of Baltimore's black youth are in the clutches of the state, whether jail, prison, bail, probation or parole.

Mass incarceration is largely the result of the racist "war on drugs" and stricter sentencing guidelines pushed by Democrats as well as Republicans. Today, some elements within the bourgeoisie are concerned that the country's world-leading levels of incarceration are somewhat too high, particularly because of the financial cost. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has sought of late to build up a black voting base by hypocritically intoning against "the era of mass incarceration." Now that the damage is done, she wants to distance herself from the policies of previous Democratic administrations, such as the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act signed in 1994 by her husband, then-President Bill Clinton. The leading sponsor of that act, which provided for 100,000 more cops and pumped nearly $10 billion into new prison construction, was then-Senator Joseph Biden, now Obama's vice president. Bill Clinton's administration was also responsible for "ending welfare as we know it," condemning already poverty-stricken families to complete destitution.

WV Photo

Oakland, May 1: ILWU Local 10 contingent at march during port shutdown to protest police terror.

The Need for Revolutionary Leadership

On May 2, one day after the killer cops were charged, a demonstration was held in front of City Hall with the celebratory theme "Baltimore United." *Workers Vanguard* salesmen reported that while the 4,000 who attended were relieved that charges were filed, not everyone was buying into the celebration. No surprise, sinister phalanxes of cops in riot gear and National Guardsmen were massed behind the speakers' platform. Our placard calling for the "National Guard Out!" attracted a lot of favorable attention from protesters, including from a black Vietnam vet. When asked what he thought of the rally being pitched as a party, his answer was to point to the police snipers on the roof nearby.

Many of the speakers at the rally pushed voter registration. In a town like Ferguson, Missouri, where the local government and police force were almost all white, calls for voter registration to elect black politicians last year gained some traction. But with numerous black officials running Baltimore, the hollowness of getting out the vote for these Democrats is all too apparent. On this score, liberal Rutgers professor Brittney Cooper admitted in a 29 April article on Salon.com that she was "conflicted" over what it means that three of her fellow black women (Rawlings-Blake, Lynch and Maryland National Guard general Linda Singh) "have an unprecedented amount of municipal, national and military power to put down a rebellion."

The main rally organizer was Malik Shabazz of Black Lawyers for Justice. A former member of the Nation of Islam (NOI), this all-purpose bigot is notorious for his anti-Jewish and anti-gay rants. Reactionary black nationalists like Shabazz and the NOI express the aspirations of black petty entrepreneurs who want to carve out the ghettos as their own fiefdoms. As NOI leader Louis Farrakhan grotesquely put it: "We could effect a change in the lifestyle of our people that would allow us to do more with less wages" (*A Torchlight for America* [1993]).

In promoting "black capitalism," these nationalists seek to divert anger that should be directed at the capitalist class enemy into the scapegoating of immigrants—a program that only reinforces the segregation of the black masses. In the 1990s, the NOI Security Agency had a contract to police government-subsidized housing projects in Baltimore and elsewhere. Today, Rawlings-Blake has thanked the NOI for its efforts to "keep calm and peace in our city."

The capitalist masters have long fomented racial antagonisms to divide the working class and weaken its struggles as a means to ratchet up the exploitation of all labor. The ongoing attacks on the unions and black people over the last four decades underscore the point made by Karl Marx at the time of the Civil War: "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." The working class as a whole confronts the same prospect of immiseration and hopelessness that is inflicted in a more intensified form on the bulk of the black population.

A program for black emancipation must start from the standpoint that the whole system of racist capitalist oppression has to be brought down. The current generation of youth protesting cop terror has grown up in a period of a dearth of mass social and class struggle, so many have no understanding of the possibility of such a revolutionary social transformation, much less the motor force to bring it about. The working class, concentrated at the point of production, uniquely has the social power and objective interest not only to challenge the capitalist exploiters but to overthrow their entire rotten system. That power is derived from its ability to cut off the flow of profits by withholding its labor; but it will take a leap in consciousness and organization for the proletariat to bring its power to bear in the fight for its own emancipation from capitalist wage slavery and for the liberation of the oppressed.

A small taste of the labor mobilization needed in defense of the black population was shown by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, which shut down the Port of Oakland for one shift on May Day. A contingent of up to 300 longshoremen with a union banner demanding "Stop Police Terror!" headed up a 3,000-strong march to Oakland City Hall that day. ILWU members also carried placards with photos of longshoremen's relatives who had been killed by the cops, including 24-year-old Richard "Pedie" Perez. The majority black Local 10 represents a living link that could fuse the social power of labor to the anger of the downtrodden ghetto masses. But the potential power of the ILWU and other unions is kept under wraps by the labor bureaucracy, which is wedded to the rule of the U.S. imperialists and preaches reliance on Democratic Party politicians.

Plebeian discontent and the disgruntlement of working people can go in many different directions but will not in and of themselves lead to revolutionary consciousness. The spontaneous displays of anger by the dispossessed in Baltimore, Ferguson and beyond will once again be dissipated into the swamp of liberal reformism absent the intervention of a proletarian vanguard party. It is the purpose of the Spartacist League to build such a party, which would act as a tribune of the people, combating every manifestation of oppression. The vital struggles for labor's immediate interests are also in the immediate interests of the ghetto masses—the fight to organize the unorganized, end "two-tier" wage scales, for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to provide jobs for all.

A revolutionary workers party would not only arm workers with the program to fight for such felt needs but render the advanced sections of the working class conscious of its historic role as the gravedigger of capitalism. The proletariat must rip the productive wealth out of the hands of the greedy and irresponsible capitalists and begin building a collectivized, planned economy based on social need, not profit. When working people run society, there will be massive investment in quality housing, education and health care for all. Black workers, who remain a strategic component of the American working class, will play a central role in the struggle for workers rule. ***For black liberation through socialist revolution!*** ■

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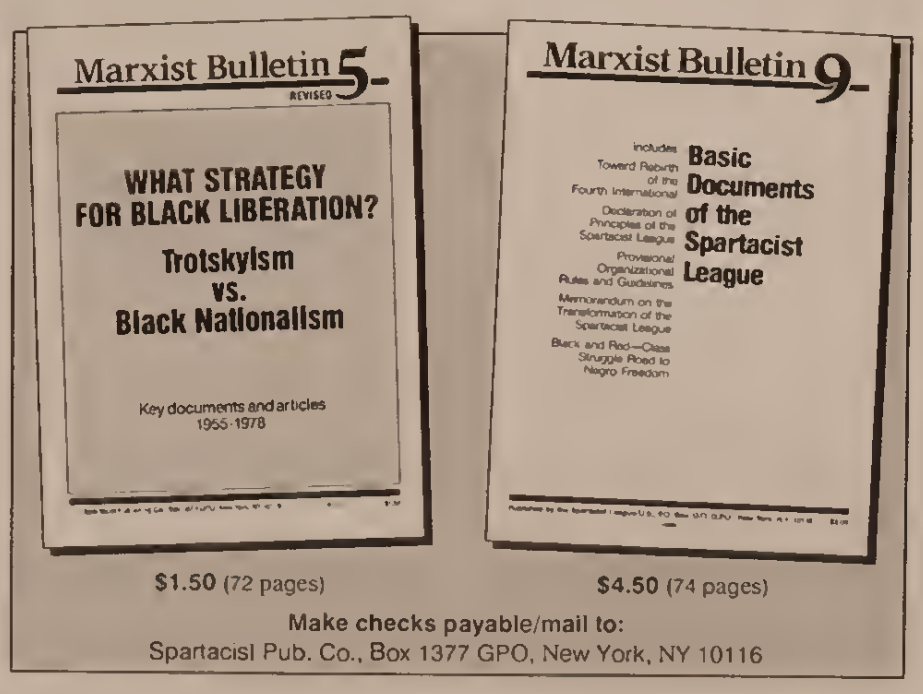

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Greek Trotskyists Say:
Syriza Is Class Enemy of Workers!

We reprint below an article issued by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece on April 22 and distributed at May Day rallies in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Syriza's January 25 election victory raised the hopes of many working people for some relief from the devastation of the economic crisis and the austerity imposed by the EU [European Union] and the IMF [International Monetary Fund]. Less than a month later, Syriza capitulated to a four-month extension of the terms of the [EU-IMF austerity] Memorandum and has reversed numerous pre-election promises. Nonetheless, many working people still hold out hope for some improvement in jobs, wages and pensions and have the perception that at least Syriza is trying to stand up to the Troika [EU, IMF and European Central Bank]. But sooner or later it will become clear that Syriza cannot fulfill its promises. This is because, as we explained in our election statement, Syriza is not only "committed to keeping Greece in the EU, which is a pledge for more hunger and joblessness, but also... does not in any way represent the interests of the working class" ("No Vote to Syriza! Vote Communist Party!" Trotskyist Group of Greece statement, 15 January [reprinted in *WV* No. 1060, 23 January]).

Syriza has always been committed to preserving the capitalist system and for continuing Greece's membership in the EU and euro zone. This means submitting to the purpose of the EU, which is to maximize capitalist profit by driving down the working and living conditions of workers and the oppressed throughout all of Europe, including in imperialist countries like Germany. It also means making working people pay for the debts racked up by the capitalists and their bloodsucking banks. It is not only the imperialists, ***but also the Greek capitalist class*** who have benefited from the EU's destruction of labor rights and imposition of austerity.

Our party, the International Communist League, has always stood in opposition to the imperialist EU and the euro—including our sections in imperialist countries like Germany, France and Britain. We understand that the EU is an unstable consortium of capitalist powers—because it is based on bourgeois nation-states—and is dominated by the imperialists, centrally Germany. The EU is therefore a union of the capitalist exploiters against the workers so that they can gain a competitive advantage over their imperialist rivals like the U.S. and Japan. For this reason, the EU cannot be reformed into a "social" Europe that serves the interests of working people, as Syriza and others claim. ***Down with the imperialist EU!***

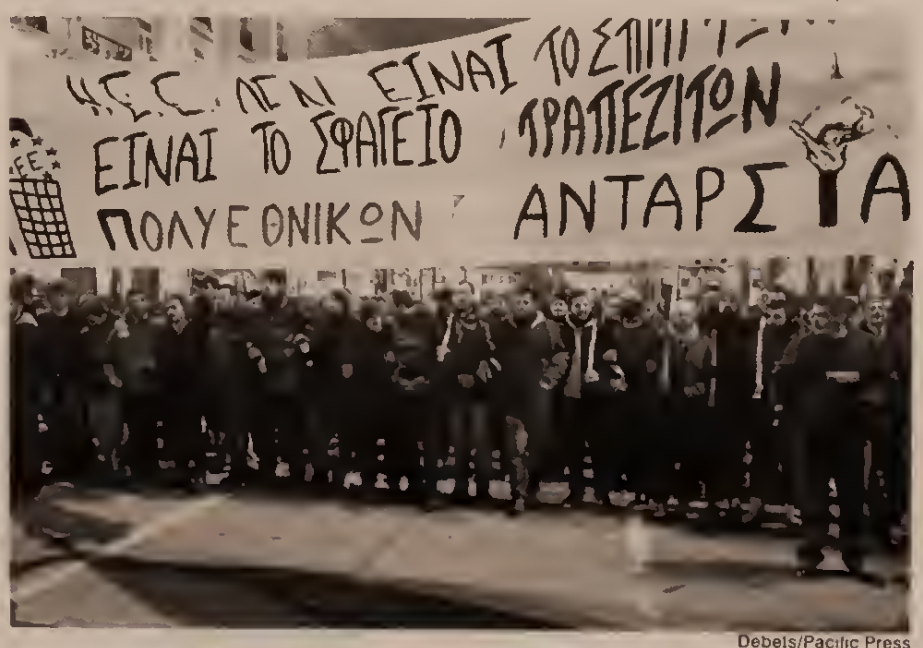
We gave critical electoral support to the reformist KKE [Communist Party of Greece] in the January 25 election because of our principled, class opposition to the bourgeois Syriza party and to the imperialist EU. But as our propaganda explained, we called for a vote to the KKE while sharply criticizing the KKE's nationalist populist program, which is an obstacle to the fight for socialist revolution. We opposed any vote to Syriza as well as to any of the reformist leftists who tail it, like Antarsya. And we stand in irreconcilable opposition to this so-called "left" capitalist government. ***No support to the Syriza government!***

Reuters

Berlin, 23 March: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Syriza with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, "negotiating" the EU's starvation policies against Greek workers and oppressed.

Down With the Imperialist EU!

Marxists give no support to ***any*** capitalist government, whether it is run by a bourgeois party like Syriza or even by a reformist workers party like the KKE. This is true on ***both*** a national and local level. In opposition to so-called Marxists who promote the idea that the workers can take over the existing state, Marx explained in *The Civil War in France* (1871), "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." And as Lenin explained in *The State and Revolution* (1917), the working class has to "***smash*** the bourgeois state machine" through revolution and replace it with its own class dictatorship, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," based on organs of workers rule like soviets. In opposition to this understanding, reformists like Antarsya and others promote the illusion that this bourgeois government can be pressured to reform Greek capitalism in a socialist direction. The nationalist populist illusions promoted by the left, including the KKE, are also contrary to Marxism and Leninism because they dissolve the social power of the working class into a Greek "people," all of whom supposedly have common national interests against the imperialists and the big monopolies.



Debels/Pacific Press

Athens, 11 February: Fake socialists in Antarsya join protest in support of capitalist Syriza government.

The Leninist Struggle for Proletarian Class Independence

The precondition to the victory of the 1917 October Revolution, the world's only successful workers revolution, was the forging of a Leninist vanguard party that fought to guard the complete political and organizational independence of the workers party from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces. As Lenin put it in a polemic against the Menshe-viks: "The thinking worker knows that the most dangerous of advisers are those liberal friends of the workers who claim to be defending their interests, but are actually trying to destroy the class independence of the proletariat and its organization" ("The Liberals' Corruption of the Workers," 31 January 1914). The question of whose class interests a party or movement actually represents, even if it has some left rhetoric, is thus a vital question for revolutionaries.

Much of the Greek left, including the KKE, falsely refers to Syriza as a reformist or social-democratic workers party. But such parties have a working-class base and a pro-capitalist leadership. Syriza has never been rooted in the working class and openly represents the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Syriza's base was always among the petty bourgeoisie: students, small business owners, farmers and professionals like doctors, lawyers and professors. Why does this matter? Because, unlike the proletariat, this heterogeneous section of society has no independent class interests. The upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie are linked directly to the big bourgeoisie, while its middle layers are squeezed by the big capitalists. While the petty bourgeoisie's lower strata are often oppressed under capitalism, it does not have a direct class interest in the overthrow of capitalism and thus tends to follow the bourgeoisie in political outlook.

In capitalist society, what makes the proletariat different is its relationship to the means of production: its labor in large-scale industry is the source of the enormous profits of the capitalist class, which are derived from the exploitation of the worker who owns nothing but his labor power. This gives the proletariat the power to stop the flow of the bourgeoisie's profits by striking. Moreover, the proletariat can only end its exploitation by destroying private ownership of the means of production—by ripping the factories, mines and banks out of the hands of the capitalists and putting them under the ownership of society as a whole: collectivization. This is why the proletariat alone has both the power and the historic interest to carry out a socialist revolution. Such a revolution would not only end class exploitation, but also lay the basis for eliminating all the different forms of capitalist oppression suffered by the masses, such as women's, racial and national oppression. Socialist revolution would thus serve to liberate the oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie also.

Contrary to the myth promoted by the Greek left that a revolution will be carried out by the "people," Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848):

> "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.... The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat... they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat."

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1069

29 May 2015

Amtrak Train Wreck

Capitalist Murder on the Tracks

The May 12 Philadelphia Amtrak derailment lays bare how the country's rulers sacrifice the safety of workers and the public on the altar of capitalist profit. Amtrak Train 188 flew off a notoriously tight curve on the Northeast Corridor at over 100 miles per hour (twice the speed limit), killing eight people and injuring more than 200. As is the norm in industrial accidents, the bourgeoisie's mouthpieces and government representatives rushed to blame the worker involved, with Philly's Democratic mayor Michael Nutter deriding the 32-year-old engineer, Brandon Bostian, as "reckless." In fact, those who know him have described Bostian as very safety-conscious. He also reportedly often posted online messages urging the railroad companies to do more to advance safety.

The immediate cause of the derailment is not known, not least because Bostian has no memory of the crash. But what is clear is that for decades the government and the rail companies have obstructed and undermined safety measures that could have prevented this accident and many others. Following the fatal September 2008 train crash in Chatsworth, California, the federal government mandated that railroads implement a system known as positive train control (PTC) by the end of 2015. This technology relies on either transponders or GPS to prevent trains from exceeding the speed limit on any given section of track and can also prevent train collisions.

The National Transportation Safety Board found that between 2004 and 2014, PTC could have prevented or mitigated 25 train accidents in which a total of 65 people died and over 1,100 were injured. But the rail companies view PTC only as another expense. Thus, they have been making excuses for not implementing it while lining up Congress to extend the deadline.

Amtrak has an older safety system known as automatic train control on the section of track where the Philadelphia derailment occurred, but it was only operational on the southbound track. By the time train service resumed after the wreck, Amtrak had switched on automatic train control in both directions. Of course, that is little comfort to the injured or families of the dead.

Whatever technology is in place (or not), an essential safety precaution would be having two people in the locomotive cab! Since 1983, Amtrak has insisted on operating its passenger trains in the Northeast Corridor with only one engineer. Freight trains of 100 or more cars, at one time worked by a crew of five or six, are today often manned by only an engineer and a conductor. And the freight rail bosses are now pushing to have only a single crew member on their trains, a recipe for disaster that the rail unions have been resisting.

Reuters

Search for victims after preventable May 12 train disaster in Philadelphia.

The ongoing reduction in train crew size is part of the bosses' antiunion offensive that kicked into high gear with the deregulation of the industry in the 1970s. Railroad employment has plunged from over 600,000 in 1970 to less than 250,000 today (leaving 20,000 at Amtrak).

The Philadelphia derailment recalls that of a Metro-North commuter train at Spuyten Duyvil in the Bronx in 2013. In that accident, the engineer, suffering from fatigue exacerbated by sleep apnea, nodded off as the train approached a sharp bend. Then, too, positive train control or a second crewmember in the cab (or even an alerter alarm) could have prevented the derailment, in which four were killed. The company not only tried to blame the engineer, William Rockefeller, but also seized on the accident as a pretext for a crackdown on New York City transit workers for trivial infractions.

Just recently, the Bronx district attorney announced that Rockefeller will not face criminal charges, although his job remains in limbo. Criminally disregarding the dangers of fatigue, this year Amtrak has introduced variable start times and shorter breaks, with many workers already made to endure 12-hour shifts. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), today a part of the Teamsters, has criticized the company's "turning of long understood standards of fatigue mitigation here on their heads."

In a *New York Times* opinion piece (18 May), Richard White, author of *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (2011), debunks the myth that there was ever a time when American "trains ran efficiently, safely and dependably," concluding "there was no such golden age." As in other inherently dangerous industries like mining, the only way to establish and enforce safety is through mobilizing labor's power. Workers must be able to shut down unsafe equipment and operations with the full backing of the unions. A fight for higher manning levels, from the cabs to the maintenance crews, and a shorter workweek with no loss in pay not only would open up more jobs but also is literally a question of life and death.

Any effort by the unions to control safety will invariably come up against the rail corporations and the bosses' state. The capitalists and their government have long recognized the potential power of the transport unions to interrupt commerce and cut off the broader flow of profits. Thus, they have taken measures to curtail the ability of rail workers to strike. The 1926 Railway Labor Act (RLA) was enacted to buy labor peace after decades of unrest marked by major work stoppages in which soldiers were dispatched against striking workers. Establishing guidelines for official union recognition, the RLA virtually outlawed strikes by locking unions into endless "cooling off" periods and government-imposed mediation. Later extended to cover the airline industry, the RLA served as a model for subsequent labor legislation, all of which has sought to hobble labor's power by putting the unions under the thumb of the state.

This country's major unions were built through militant class struggle that often defied such antiunion laws and faced down attacks by strikebreakers, cops and the military. Instead of strike action, though, the trade-union leadership today substitutes begging the bosses for some crumbs and lobbying Congress. This policy of class collaboration has led to one defeat after another for the unions and demoralized their membership.

A stark illustration is given by the union bureaucracy's support to supposed "friend of labor" Democrats, who in fact, no less than the Republicans, represent the interests of the capitalists. The real role of the Democrats can be seen in President Barack Obama's use of the RLA last year to force striking workers at Philadelphia's SEPTA commuter rail system back to work. He also invoked the RLA to prevent a national rail strike in 2011; his Democratic predecessor Bill Clinton wielded the RLA 14 times to squelch airline and rail strikes, including heading off a nationwide Amtrak strike in 1997.

In order for the unions to effectively champion the interests of their members, a new, class-struggle leadership must be forged. Such a leadership, recognizing that the interests of workers are counterposed to those of their capitalist exploiters, would rely on the social power of the workers themselves, not the agencies and representatives of the class enemy. Uniting all rail workers—passenger and freight, skilled and unskilled—in joint action would maximize that power and go a long way toward breaking down craft divisions, paving the way for forming one industrial rail union. The BLE merger with the Teamsters in 2004 was something else entirely: a move by the labor statesmen to further their hobnobbing in the halls of Congress.

For Union Control of Safety!

The Railroads and Capitalist Decay

The Northeast Corridor, stretching between Boston and Washington, D.C., is Amtrak's busiest and most profitable line. While ridership has been growing every year, government funding has been strangled. Like the rest of the country's dilapidated rail system (not to mention crumbling roads, bridges and other infrastructure), the Northeast Corridor has been deprived of billions of dollars needed for essential maintenance, repairs and upgrades, including to its century-old bridges. The day after the Philadelphia

continued on page 11

An Activist Remembers the Civil Rights Movement

Malcolm X: The Man, the Myth, the Struggle

Malcolm X addressing a Black Muslim rally in New York City, 6 August 1963.

We reprint below comments by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour at a December 1992 forum in Oakland, California, originally published in the Spartacist pamphlet *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 10. That forum featured presentations by three comrades who had participated in the turbulent civil rights struggles of the 1960s, at the time that Malcolm X rose to prominence.

* * *

When I was 19 years old, I was involved with a left-wing socialist group at City College, which is located on the fringes of Harlem. We organized for Malcolm X to come and address the student body. Now, he didn't come with a big entourage, and since I was chairing the meeting, just before he spoke I found myself standing next to him in the auditorium. I felt terribly intimidated and sheepish—I mean, here I am with Malcolm X. Just to make conversation, I noted that the previous summer I had gone to Cuba where I had met some people from the Nation of Islam. Malcolm expressed real interest and sympathy for the Cuban Revolution. He said he didn't know very much about it and asked what my impressions were. He wasn't just being polite. He really wanted to know what a 19-year-old college kid thought of the Cuban Revolution.

A few minutes later he spoke to several hundred students, most of them white and generally liberal, and the main point he made was to attack support for and illusions in the Democratic Party. At that particular time, Lyndon Johnson was pushing the Civil Rights Bill and a lot of people thought that the President of the United States had finally taken a hard line against white supremacy. Malcolm said, "Don't be fooled! Johnson's best friend in Washington is Georgia Senator Richard Russell who is an arch segregationist." He said, "When somebody says they are against racism but their best friend is Richard Russell, it's like somebody saying they are against train robbing and their best friend is Jesse James."

This incident reveals what's missing from Spike Lee's [1992] film *Malcolm X*—the momentous political struggle in this country and abroad which formed the background of Malcolm's rise to prominence. The debate that was raging among the activists. Did you support the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnamese Revolution against U.S. imperialism? Or did you support the U.S. government in trying to overthrow Castro and in trying to destroy the Viet Cong in blood in the name of anti-communism? Did you attack John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson as war criminals who oppressed and savaged the dark-skinned peoples of the world? Or did you look to them to bring democracy and civil rights and racial equality to black people in this country? Did you believe that civil rights militants had the right to defend themselves against the cracker sheriffs and the Klan and the White Citizens Councils? Or did you maintain that in fighting for their democratic rights black people could do no more than engage in nonviolent protest?

These were the issues which polarized American society. These were the issues that defined Malcolm's politics and determined his appeal. Because what he was in the minds of everyhody—black, white, left, right, center—he was the best known, the most powerful, the most incisive enemy of what we at the time called the "white power structure." Spike Lee doesn't understand that because he doesn't understand how convulsive and explosive American society was in the early 1960s. The civil rights movement, in the sweep of its mass support, in the aspirations for freedom and equality which it generated among black people, and in bringing into existence a whole generation of young radical activists, had a *revolutionary potential*.

In the South, the entire black community was mobilized—hundreds of thousands of people were confronting a totalitarian racist police state which they had lived under for three-quarters of a century, since Radical Reconstruction was

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TROTSKY

LENIN

Socialism and Art

The 1917 October Revolution, which shattered the capitalist order in backward Russia, was animated by the goal of building a society on socialist principles—that is, the satisfaction of people's material and cultural needs. The birth of the Soviet workers state in what the Bolsheviks viewed as the opening shot of world socialist revolution gave rise to a great wave of artistic experimentation and ferment. This creative energy was later smothered by the Stalin-led bureaucracy that usurped political power from the proletariat beginning in 1923-24 amid the continuing isolation and backwardness of the Soviet Union. In the excerpt below, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained the material foundation of culture.

If the dictatorship of the proletariat should prove incapable, in the next few years, of organizing its economic life and of securing at least a living minimum of material comforts for its population, then the proletarian régime will inevitably turn to dust. The economic problem at present is the problem above all problems.

But even a successful solution of the elementary problems of food, clothing, shelter, and even of literacy, would in no way signify a complete victory of the new historic principle, that is, of Socialism. Only a movement of scientific thought on a national scale and the development of a new art would signify that the historic seed has not only grown into a plant, but has even flowered. In this sense, the development of art is the highest test of the vitality and significance of each epoch.

Culture feeds on the sap of economics, and a material surplus is necessary, so that culture may grow, develop and become subtle. Our bourgeoisie laid its hand on literature, and did this very quickly at the time when it was growing rich. The proletariat will be able to prepare the formation of a new, that is, a Socialist culture and literature, not by the laboratory method on the basis of our present-day poverty, want and illiteracy, but by large social, economic and cultural means. Art needs comfort, even abundance. Furnaces have to be hotter, wheels have to move faster, looms have to turn more quickly, schools have to work better.

—Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (1924)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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abandoned and defeated in the aftermath of the Civil War. In the North it was different, because blacks had, legally, the formal democratic rights which the Southern civil rights movement was fighting for. They could vote, they could go into restaurants and ride buses with white people. But blacks in the North as well as in the South did not consider the civil rights movement in this narrow a way. They saw it as a movement for *general* social equality, even though there was no coherent or agreed-upon program for how to achieve that.

In Spike Lee's movie, you don't realize that at one point there were probably more civil rights militants in the town of Albany, Georgia than there were in the entire Nation of Islam nationally. A whole generation had been standing up to the cops in the South and in the North. Like Malcolm X, they came to understand the link between racism in the United States and the oppression by the American government and the big corporations of dark-skinned people throughout the world.

Preachers' Pacifism vs. Militant Self-Defense for the Movement

That's why the question of nonviolence at that moment was so decisive and so important. It wasn't about the right of individuals to defend themselves or their families. In the movie they show Malcolm X's father (who was a black-nationalist minister) warding off an attack by local Klansmen by threatening them with his pistol. But that wasn't what the debate was. We were talking about armed self-defense for a *moss movement*—a movement which embraced millions and which was confronting the capitalist state.

The question of nonviolence was basically a question of your attitude toward the system. To say that the civil rights movement had the right to defend itself against racist terror was really to say that you had the right of revolution; that you didn't accept the rules of the game. And when King pledged nonviolence, what he was really saying is he was pledging allegiance to the white power structure. He was saying that the black movement cannot go beyond the bounds set for it by the liberal wing of the ruling class represented by the Democratic Party. That's what it meant. And that's why Malcolm X called King a "20th century Uncle Tom" whose primary concern is to defend the white man.

When Malcolm said that, a lot of people in the civil rights movement, even people who were critical of King, thought that this was exaggerated and unfair. Yet a few months after Malcolm was assassinated, the black ghetto in Watts in Los Angeles rose up. Black youth ran through the streets demonstrating defiance of the ruling class. The police and the National Guard were sent in and killed more than 30 black kids—most of them unarmed, most of them in cold blood. What did King do? Did he call upon the LAPD and the FBI and the National Guard to "turn the other cheek," to throw away their guns and resort to "nonviolent resistance"? No! He said it was necessary that "as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them." Malcolm X was known above all at the time as a person who said that the oppressed black masses had the right and the duty to overthrow the system which oppressed and degraded them, although he did not have a coherent program to do that.

The Myth of "Black Capitalism"

While Malcolm X was alive, he was slandered as some kind of crazed fanatic and advocate of black violence against white America. But today there is a different kind of falsification, which in its way is no less pernicious. He is now presented as a pioneer advocate of black-owned business, as a man who believed in the economic development of the segregated ghetto within the framework and under the rules set by white-dominated American capitalism. This line and lie is perpetrated not only by nationalist hustlers like Farrakhan, who when Malcolm split from the Nation of Islam said that he deserved death for defying Elijah Muhammad, but it's also perpetrated by the house organ of international financiers. A recent issue of the London *Economist* says that Malcolm's message was "black capitalism."

It is true that Malcolm sought, both as a Muslim and somewhat later, to break poor blacks from the degrading pathology of ghetto life: alcoholism, drug addiction, wife-beating, prostitution. He told black people that they should stand on their own two feet and not depend on the white man. But by that he did not mean that they should take over grocery stores and dry-cleaning stores and open sweatshops in the ghetto to rip off and exploit their own people! This I will tell you, that while he was alive, *no one*, absolutely no one believed that Malcolm X was an advocate of "black capitalism" or any other kind of capitalism. Quite the contrary.

If Malcolm X did not advocate liberal integrationism like King, and he did not advocate separatist capitalism like Farrakhan, what *did* he stand for in a positive sense? The movie shows that it was his pilgrimage to Mecca which broke Malcolm from a narrow, racially defined black nationalism. That is true. But the movie does not show that Malcolm undertook a second trip to North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa which had a profound effect on his political outlook. After that trip Malcolm talked not only about opposing racial or national oppression, but "overthrowing the system of exploitation."

Marzani & Munsell

Ex-Marine and NAACP leader Robert F. Williams (inset) organized armed self-defense against KKK terror in Monroe, North Carolina, in 1957.

Does that mean that Malcolm had become a Marxist or was moving toward Marxism? This is the position that was argued by the late George Breitman, for example, a professed Trotskyist who edited a number of Malcolm's speeches and writings. But that too is a falsification. In the last period of his life, Malcolm X came under the influence of the new bourgeois-nationalist regimes in the Arab East and black Africa; people like Egypt's Nasser and [Kenya's] Jomo Kenyatta. These people denounced Western imperialism, Western racism. They talked about "African socialism" or some other kind of "socialism." Malcolm bought this.

Malcolm X understood American society in his own way. He saw through the lies and hypocrisy of American capitalist politicians, including black Democrats like the slick Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell. But he actually knew very little about the Egyptian or Algerian or Kenyan societies *at the bose*. He took at face value the pretense of these new ruling elites that they were opposed to racism the world over; that they were believers in and champions of social equality. Much of Malcolm's energy in the last period of his life was directed at getting what he called the Afro-Asian bloc to pass a resolution in the United Nations condemning racism in America. To begin with, there was no way that was going to happen, because all of these regimes depended on money from Washington and London and Paris, even though they denounced Western imperialism at every opportunity. They denounced Western imperialism, they flirted with Moscow, they said they were nonaligned in the Cold War—as a ploy to get *more* money from Washington and London and Paris. But even if they had passed a resolution in the UN condemning racism in the United States, the American ruling class would have ignored it.

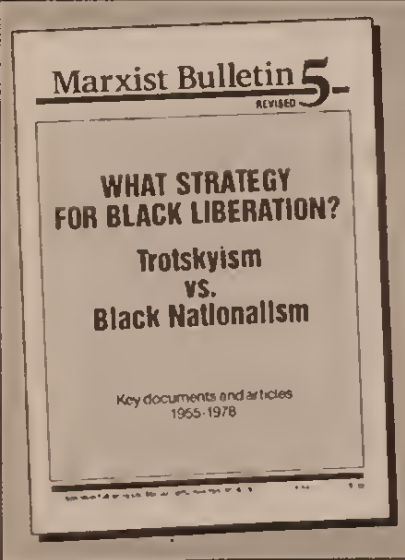
AP

Supporters of Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party hold sit-down protest outside 1964 Democratic Party National Convention as part of attempt to unseat all-white official state delegation.

While Malcolm's campaign to enlist the United Nations in the service of anti-racism was misdirected, he nonetheless understood that simply by its own resources and its own efforts, the American black community could not achieve equality, could not overcome and break the power of the American government and its ruling class. That's why he was so desirous of finding powerful allies outside the U.S. But Malcolm X did not see that there existed a powerful force *within* the United States, potentially hostile to the white power structure, namely the racially integrated working class.

He saw American society as racially divided, but not as class-divided. His view was shaped by his own personal experience. He had been a ghetto hustler, then a prisoner for several years, and then the minister of a black-nationalist religious sect. Unlike millions of other American black men and women, he had never worked with whites or Hispanics. He knew nothing of the trade-union movement. He had never been involved in a strike or defending a picket line against the cops and the scabs. He did not understand that it is the strategic role of blacks in the working class which gives them the potential leverage to overturn the racist capitalist system.

Black workers, armed with a revolutionary socialist program, and organized by a multiracial communist party, can lead backward white workers even though they have racist attitudes and prejudices, in struggle against the ruling class. Malcolm X believed and stated very forcefully that black people must fight for equality and freedom "by any means necessary." The necessary means is working-class revolution. And that revolution when it comes will rightly honor Malcolm X as a courageous fighter and a martyr for the cause of the liberation of humanity. ■



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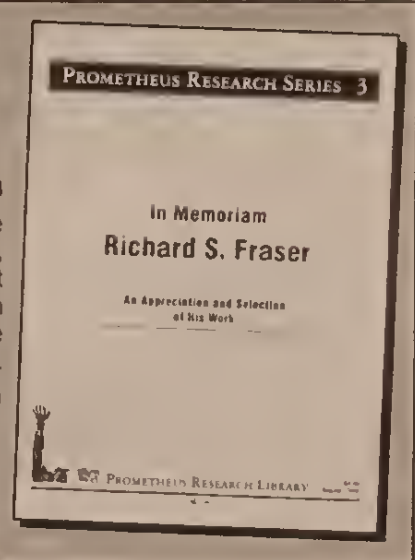

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Stalinists and Artists in the U.S. "Red Decade"

NYU's *Left Front* Art Show

by Helen Cantor

New York University's recent art show, "The Left Front: Radical Art in the 'Red Decade,' 1929-1940," which closed April 4, was a hit-tersweet experience. (An earlier version, based on Northwestern University's collection, was shown in Chicago last year.) In the present period, with successful workers struggles few and far between, the pro-working-class images—photos, movies of mass May Day parades in New York City, pictures of Great Depression misery, protests, strikes, the fight against Jim Crow segregation—were, of course, moving. The show included over 100 works by artists in the U.S., many of which are lithographs and etchings, reproducible techniques designed to be accessible to workers.

But there was something wrong with this picture. It wasn't the individual artworks themselves, but the sentimental, prettifying view of and narrow focus on the U.S. Communist Party (CP). The John Reed Clubs and their successor, the American Artists' Congress, both Stalinist front groups from day one, were the admired centerpiece of the show, to the exclusion of what was a far more complex intersection of politics and art at the time.

Courtesy of Belverd and Marian Needles Collection

Pieces displayed at the exhibit. Left: Bernarda Bryson Shahn's *The Lovesfonite*, 1933, depicts two cadre giving the cold shoulder to a supporter of the expelled Jay Lovestone. Right: 1931 Soviet pamphlet titled "American Artists of the John Reed Club."

The show's co-curators, Jill Bugajski and John Paul Murphy, Northwestern PhD graduates, did make some observations regarding the American CP's relations with Moscow. And, of course, an academic art show can't be about everything; you do need some kind of focus. The problem is that the presentation blurred out the horrible effects of Stalinism's censorship of intellectual efforts, including art. This censorship was an ideological counterpart to the consolidation of the Moscow bureaucracy headed by Stalin (which had usurped political power from the Soviet working class beginning in 1923-24) and its murderous betrayals of the struggle for proletarian revolution worldwide. The show presented an alternate reality: a provincial "social realism"-style tin-roofed shack on the all-American prairie, false shelter from the wild storms raging internationally.

The "Left Front" referred to 1929-40 as the "red decade," a term coined by onetime Stalinist admirer turned anti-Communist author Eugene Lyons. The curators, who unlike Lyons were approving in this description, put up a big red 1937 Spanish Civil War poster by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT trade union. Okay, but what about the Stalinists' murder of anarchists, POUM militants and others after the heroic Barcelona Days? What about Hitler's rise to power in 1933, unfought by the German Communist Party? What about the 1936-1938 Moscow Trials of the Old Bolsheviks (party members before 1917) and the executions, exiles and mass labor camps for revolutionaries in the USSR? Ending the decade, what about the 1940 assassination of Leon Trotsky in Mexico via a Stalinist killer's ice axe? This decade runs red with the blood of our comrades, is what I thought.

I found myself wandering around the Village after seeing the show, muttering: "Not revolutionary art, propaganda! Stalinist hacks! But some pieces were sincere, good! But Esenin and Mayakovsky committed suicide!" And so on. So what follows is not an "art review," except for one comment: There is nothing "revolutionary" or "radical" (terms the curators flung around) about this art as such, whether in terms of experimental technique or new concept. It's propaganda and genre art, with a few exceptions, by artists who sympathized with the poor, the workers and even with the CP. The pedestrian aesthetic level was not entirely the Stalinists' fault, since American art in general was pretty provincial until the explosion of abstract expressionism after World War II—the 1913 New York Armory Show that introduced Cubism to the U.S. knocked *everybody* for a loop. Rather, I want to discuss the politics the pictures don't show, and the revolutionary Trotskyist alternative to the CP's lies and crimes regarding culture, as so much else.

Stalinism Lite

The Marxist program of world socialist revolution that animated the Bolsheviks of 1917 was flatly rejected with Stalin's 1924 invention of "socialism in one country" (meaning "socialism" in *only* one country). This dogma and the Moscow bureaucracy's later proclamation of "socialist realism" and ban on "modernist" art encouraged the production of some really dreary art by CP-influenced artists in the U.S. Such works are about what you could expect from a party whose big Popular Front slogan was "Communism is 20th Century Americanism."

So why is this period popular again? Theodore Draper, in a 1986 "Afterword" to his classic book *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), writes of a generation of academic social historians (Paul Buhle, Mark Naison, etc.) who were former New Leftists: "Radicals have usually preferred to behold their promised land in the future; these post-New Leftists have been impelled to find it in the past. They have invented a radicalism of nostalgia."

This now third-hand nostalgia seems to have impelled the New York show. Co-curator John Paul Murphy's essay "The Left Front: From Revolutionary to Popular" references the 2007 recession and protests like Occupy Wall Street, stating: "In this context, the bracing images by 1930s artist-activists become newly vivid." The 1930s, that's okay, but go no further—any earlier, any more vivid, and *then* they would have to deal with the Bolshevik-led October 1917 Russian Revolution, which actually overthrew the bourgeoisie. That far back these historians don't want to go. Because then they would have to take a side. So that's why they start with 1929. It's not really about the Great Depression.

By 1929, the U.S. CP's subservience to the conservative Moscow bureaucracy had been solidified. Earlier, when still a revolutionary force under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership, the Communist International helped "Americanize" the CP by emphasizing that the fight for socialist revolution and the struggle for black liberation are inextricably linked, as a new book, *The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929* (2014) by Jacob Zumoff, details. But that perspective was dumped by the Stalinized Comintern, which in 1928 ordered the CP to chop off its left wing—the Trotskyists around James P. Cannon—and then in 1929 its right wing, centered on the loathsome Jay Lovestone, who had bet on the Right Opposition of Nikolai Bukharin a little too long. What remained was a crippled, pliant CP, faithfully lurching after every turn of Stalinist policy.

Aleksandr Gerasimov

***Artists at a Meeting with Stalin and Voroshilov*, 1938-51, an example of the stultified, Stalinist-imposed "socialist realist" style, depicts the artist himself perched loyally at Stalin's left elbow.**

In the U.S., the CP's "Left Turn" of 1928-29 included policies like dual unionism (leaving the AFL unions to create "red" ones), the demand for self-determination of the so-called Black Belt in the South, and attacks on other leftists, mainly the Social Democracy, as "social fascists" worse than the Nazis. Though sounding very radical, all this allowed the Communists to evade the hard political struggle to crack through the obstacles to an American revolution, a goal the CP leadership had, in fact, abandoned. At the same time, the tremendous authority of the Bolshevik Revolution and some of the CP's activities, which included leading strikes and fighting for black rights, such as its "Scottsboro Boys" defense work throughout the 1930s, gave the Communists credibility in the eyes of many. This is the period in which the John Reed Clubs were founded, in 1929.

Ultraleftism and "Proletarian Culture"

The "Left Front" displayed the 1932 "Draft Manifesto" of the New York John Reed Club, whose Moscow-inspired Proletkult (proletarian culture) theme was that art *must* be a class weapon. "This class struggle plays hell with your poetry," said the *actual* John Reed, author of *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919), a founder of the American CP who died in 1920 and who knew firsthand more about revolution and poetry than anybody in the Stalinist clubs named after him. Then-Trotskyist sympathizer Max Eastman recalled Reed's statement in *Artists in Uniform* (1934).

An essay commissioned for the show by University College London art history professor Andrew Hemingway points out that the John Reed Clubs, and especially the Communist writer Mike Gold, held to "the notion of Proletarian Art—the idea that the working class would organically produce a great artistic style, a form of heroic realism, out of the crucible of its own direct experience." Trotsky's classic *Literature and Revolution* (1924) refutes this simple-minded proposition in two ways. First, the proletariat needs to conquer political power because under capitalism it has no access to wealth and leisure and thus cannot possibly create its own culture. Second, and more profoundly, once successful proletarian revolutions begin to create a world socialist society, the proletariat will cease to exist as a class, along with all other classes (thus the withering away of the state), and the new culture will be a truly universal ***human*** culture for the first time.

Unless trivialized as genre painting or propaganda, "Proletarian Art" is a contradiction in terms. Trotsky wrote in "The Suicide of Vladimir Mayakovsky" (1930):

> "The current official ideology of 'proletarian literature' is based—we see the same thing in the artistic sphere as in the economic—on a total lack of understanding of the *rhythms and periods of time* necessary for cultural maturation. The struggle for 'proletarian culture'—something on the order of the 'total collectivization' of all humanity's gains within the span of a single five-year plan—had at the beginning of the October Revolution the character of utopian idealism, and it was precisely on this basis that it was rejected by Lenin and the author of these lines. In recent years it has become simply a system of bureaucratic command over art and a way of impoverishing it."

The John Reed Clubs' "Manifesto" also intoned that artists must "fight against fascism, whether open or concealed, like social-fascism." The Stalinist view of social democracy ("social-fascism") as worse than fascism proved catastrophic in Germany, where the CP refused to initiate a united front with the reformist Social Democratic Party to stop the Nazis' rise to power in 1933. Maybe this could have stopped the Holocaust. A few cartoons satirizing evil fascists hardly compensate for this betrayal.

The U.S. CP also regarded the "social fascists" as the main enemy. In NYC on 16 February 1934, Alan M. Wald recounts in his useful book, *The New York Intellectuals* (1987): "The Communist Party, carrying out its line against 'social fascism,' violently disrupted a Socialist Party rally at Madison Square Garden organized to protest the Austrian chancellor Dolfus's [sic] armed attack on workers' houses in Vienna, which were mainly occupied by Austrian Social Democrats."

Herding Cats

Organizing artists is like trying to herd cats—and without state power, the American CP had no real coercive force, unlike in the USSR. That's why there are some good, even famous, artists in this show—like Rockwell Kent, Stuart Davis, Isabel Bishop, Reginald Marsh and the "Ashcan School" among others—who went their own way artistically. But the CP tried to crack down as much as it could.

In his essay, Hemingway remarks that some influential Party cadre "bemoaned the character of much of the membership as 'uprooted bohemian elements' and '*hangers on of the art world*,' and complained of the difficulties they faced" [emphasis in original]. As a general rule, artists and bureaucrats of whatever stripe are oil and water. When artists in the Works Progress Administration art project held a 1937 sit-down strike against cuts in the relief program, its director, Holger Cahill, fumed: "These people are psychopaths, they are basically unemployable, and you can't do anything with them."

In our 1992 obituary of Fritz Brosius, a German Expressionist-inspired artist and longtime friend of the Spartacist League, we wrote: "In 1932, when the New York John Reed Clubs had been forced to admit their 'grave error' in asking the Mexican

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

El Lissitzky

Artists El Lissitzky (far left) and Kazimir Malevich, 1920. Right: Lissitzky's Russian Civil War poster *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, 1919-20.

muralist Diego Rivera—a supporter of Leon Trotsky—to speak, Fritz [then a CP member] broke discipline by going to Rivera's New York studio as an act of protest against the party's campaign" ("Fritz Brosius: Artist and Friend," *WV* No. 553, 12 June 1992). Later, in 1938, Fritz married a member of the Socialist Party and was "excommunicated" from the CP; he found out about it by reading the CP press.

Popular Front Abroad, "Socialist Realism" in USSR

In 1935, after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern proclaimed the "Popular Front," the John Reed Clubs were summarily disbanded and replaced by the American Artists' Congress, which was shorn of any "class struggle" rhetoric. Today's "Left Front" co-curator John Paul Murphy writes: "But as the 'Red Decade' drew on, it became apparent that the far left could not ostracize itself entirely from mainstream liberalism if it were to have political impact. So new forms of solidarity emerged, coalescing into a 'Popular Front'." No, Stalin in Moscow ***ordered this line*** for all the

Fritz Brosius

Image from the 1938 series *Spartacus 1918-1919* by Fritz Brosius displayed in the Spartacist League local hall in New York.

CPs of the world, beginning in France in 1934, to further the aims of Soviet foreign policy. Namely, to enlist the imperialist "Western democracies" (formerly known as capitalist swine) in defending the USSR as Germany rearmed, and that meant no more anti-capitalist rhetoric.

George Orwell, just returned from fighting in a POUM militia in the Spanish Civil War, observed in 1937 of the Stalinist line in the British context, "The Popular Front boloney boils down to this: that when the war comes the Communists, labourites etc, instead of working to stop the war and overthrow the Government, will be on the side of the Government provided that the Government is on the 'right' side, i.e. against Germany" ("Letter to Geoffrey Gorer," *An Age Like This, 1920-1940* [1968]). For the American CP, it boiled down to: vote Democrat and screw the working class (for example, the CP's wartime no-strike pledge).

"Left Front" co-curator Jill Bugajski's essay is more tart, and accurate so far as it goes, though she too skirts unpleasant realities. In "Red Paradise to Red Dilemma," she mentions the hideous 1936-38 Moscow purge trials of Old Bolsheviks, but politely does not "name names." In fact, leaders of the American Artists' Congress put out a letter defending the show trials. This shameful statement was signed by its president, Stuart Davis (a modernist), as well as Raphael Soyer, William Gropper, Max Weber, Harry Gottlieb and other "Left Front" artists. Relentless repression of avowed communists, including the Trotskyists, was a complement to efforts to join hands with bourgeois forces.

Meanwhile, the USSR settled down into the stolid academic style of "socialist realism." The *New Yorker* art critic Peter Schjeldahl writes of the American scene in his review of the show ("Left Turns," 26 January): "The tendency most dramatically missing from the movement is Socialist Realism—utopian subjects, academic forms—which, in 1934, became by diktat the sole style allowed Soviet artists. In America, the nearest equivalents to that ideal were advanced by American Scene painters, such as Thomas Hart Benton and John Steuart Curry, whose patriotic content—folk heroes, sturdy Midwestern farmers—irked leftists." Yeah, because subject and style were uncomfortably close to what Hitler, with his ban on "degenerate art," thought uplifting: the most banal, sentimental and somehow disturbing magazine illustrations of old farmstead "just plain folks."

Many American artists also no doubt realized that giant Stalin figures overseeing the forced collectivization of the peasantry and the crazed breakneck industrialization in the USSR wouldn't be too popular in the U.S. This was the period of Soviet boy-girl-tractor novels like Ilyin's *The Great Assembly-line*, which Trotsky read in exile in 1935, commenting, "The grimmest aspect of the assembly-line romance is the absence of political rights and the lack of individuality on the part of the workers, especially the proletarian youth, who are taught only to obey."

Disillusionment with Stalinist orders on art took its toll, but the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 and the USSR's invasion of capitalist Finland and Poland set off a wave of hysterical anti-Communism that caused the American Artists' Congress to lose almost all of its liberal fellow-traveler members. After World War II, the vicious McCarthyite witchhunting of the late 1940s and '50s further crushed what was already an attenuated movement. The Trotskyists were the most consistent defenders of the USSR throughout its ***entire*** existence, upholding its socialized property forms while fighting for the Soviet proletariat to oust the bureaucratic caste that was a roadblock to world revolution. Sweeping away the global capitalist order is the only solution to the horrendous, and ultimately insoluble, problems of an isolated workers state.

Art and Revolution: So Much to Fight For

The censorship imposed in the USSR was an especially bitter blow to artists, because the October Revolution was associated with worldwide cultural upheavals that gave birth to modernism and abstract art. The Revolution offered artists the freedom and resources to explore their new visions. Vasily Kandinsky in 1919 was named Director of the Museum of Pictorial Culture in Russia and put in charge of 22 provincial museums. (At the invitation of the Bauhaus, he left in 1921.) Marc Chagall established a school where Kazimir Malevich and El Lissitzky spread new visual and graphic languages. Lenin, while cringing privately at the freewheeling enthusiasms of culture commissar Lunacharsky—notably the futurists in their bright yellow shirts and decorated faces, painting the trees in front of the Kremlin bright colors for May Day—never considered censorship. Freedom of expression for all, except active counterrevolutionaries, was a fiercely guarded principle during Lenin's lifetime.

Trotsky in exile rallied still-revolutionary Communists in the fight for a new, Fourth International after the historic defeat in Germany in 1933—and the fact that no opposition had been voiced nor a balance sheet drawn within the Comintern. Trotskyism won significant forces in the U.S., both in the Minneapolis Teamsters 1934 organizing strikes and among the "New York Intellectuals" (see Alan Wald's book). Trotsky's continued interest in art and literature brought influential cultural figures to his side for a time.

Northwestern's "Left Front" catalog printed, amid a mosaic of different takes on art, a shard that glitters with revolutionary truth, shining a critical light on the rest of the show. This was a small excerpt from the "Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art" signed by French surrealist Andre Breton and Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, two of the most universally recognized and innovative artists of the period. They had held lengthy discussions with Trotsky in Mexico, resulting in that very powerful statement, first printed in *Partisan Review* (1938). It observed:

> "In the present period of the death agony of capitalism, democratic as well as fascist, the artist sees himself threatened with the loss of his right to live and continue working. He sees all avenues of communication choked with the debris of capitalist collapse. Only naturally, he turns to the Stalinist organizations which hold out the possibility of escaping from his isolation. But if he is to avoid complete demoralization, he cannot remain there, because of the impossibility of delivering his own message and the degrading servility which these organizations exact from him in exchange for certain material advantages. He must understand that his place is elsewhere, not among those who betray the cause of the revolution and mankind, but among those who with unshaken fidelity bear witness to the revolution, among those who, for this reason, are alone able to bring it to fruition, and along with it the ultimate free expression of all forms of human genius."■

The Marxist Approach to Women's Liberation
Communism and the Family

Part One of the article that concludes here appeared in WV *No. 1068 (15 May).*

In 2005, Sharon Smith, a leading figure in the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and a self-styled theorist, produced a book, *Women and Socialism: Essays on Women's Liberation* (Haymarket Books), which is slated for a revised, expanded edition to appear later this year. An excerpt from this new edition, "Theorizing Women's Oppression: Domestic Labor and Women's Oppression," which appeared in *International Socialist Review* (March 2013), outlines what the ISO says is its new approach to feminism. Smith's "theorizing" draws heavily on the concept of unpaid domestic labor as the basis of women's oppression, as put forth in Lise Vogel's *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (Haymarket Books, 2013).

Smith begins by criticizing Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, a veritable requirement for entrée into the petty-bourgeois feminist milieu: "Marx's and Engels's

PART TWO

articulations of women's oppression often contain contradictory components—in some respects fundamentally challenging the gender status quo while in other respects merely reflecting it." Smith makes an even stronger criticism of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, an event that liberals, feminist and otherwise, consider as at best a utopian experiment that failed and at worst the birth of a totalitarian police state.

Playing to anti-Communist prejudices, Smith contends that the Bolsheviks supported the traditional role of women by elevating motherhood to the highest social duty: "Despite the enormous achievements of the 1917 Russian Revolution—including the legalization of abortion and divorce, the rights to vote and run for political office, and an end to laws criminalizing both prostitution and gay sexuality—it did not produce a theory that challenged either natural heterosexual norms or the primacy of women's maternal destinies." Smith then quotes a statement by John Riddell, a leftist historian who is frequently published in the ISO's *International Socialist Review*: "Communist women in that period viewed childbearing as a social responsibility and sought to assist 'poor women who would like to experience motherhood as the highest joy'."

By leaning on a quote taken out of context, Smith and Riddell falsify Bolshevik doctrine and practice. The Bolsheviks viewed the replacement of the family by collective means of raising children not as a distant goal in a future communist society but as a program that they were beginning to carry out in the existing Soviet Russian workers state. Alexandra Kollontai, a leader of Bolshevik work among women, advocated that socialized institutions take full responsibility for children, their physical and psychological well-being, from infancy. Speaking at the

Viktor Bulla

Women workers demonstrate in Petrograd, March 1917. Banner reads: "Comrade Workers and Soldiers, Support Our Demands." Soviet poster from 1926 proclaims: "Emancipated Woman—Build Socialism!"

Adolf Strakhov

First All-Russian Congress of Women in 1918, she stated:

> "Society is taking upon itself little by little all concerns which previously were parental....
>
> "Homes for infants, crèches, nurseries, kindergartens, children's colonies and homes, hospitals and sanitoria for curing and healing sick children, as well as children's cafeterias, school lunches, the distribution of free books to children, the outfitting of schoolchildren with warm clothing, boots—doesn't this show that caring for children is moving beyond the boundaries of the family, is being taken away from parents and transferred to the collective, to society?"
>
> —"The Family and the Communist State." *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*. Ed. William G. Rosenberg. University of Michigan Press, 1990.

In a socialist society, the nursing and teaching staff in crèches, preschools and kindergartens will consist of both males and females. In this way—and only in this way—will the age-old division of labor between men and women in raising young children be eliminated.

Kollontai's views on the future of the family were not unusual among leading Bolsheviks. In *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), Wendy Goldman, an American academic of liberal feminist sympathies, writes that Alexander Goikhbarg, the primary author of the first (1918) legal Code on Marriage, the Family, and Guardianship, "encouraged parents to reject 'their narrow and irrational love for their children.' In his view, state upbringing would 'provide vastly better results than the private, individual, unscientific, and irrational approach of individually "loving" but ignorant parents'." The Bolsheviks sought not only to liberate women from household drudgery and patriarchal domination but also to free children from the often malign effects of parental authority.

The Bolsheviks and Collective Childcare

Echoing Vogel, Smith writes:

> "If the economic function of the working-class family, so crucial in reproducing labor power for the capitalist system—and at the same time forming the social root of all women's oppression—were to be eliminated, the material basis for women's liberation could be created. This outcome can only begin to materialize with the elimination of the capitalist system, replaced by a socialist society that socializes the domestic labor formerly assigned to women."

Here Smith's use of the term "domestic labor" is ambiguous. Does she mean only housework and the physical care of young children? What about the "domestic labor" involved in what is considered parenting in the U.S. today? Smith does not say. She simply ignores the question of the interpersonal relations between a mother and her children: listening to and talking to them about their problems, desires and fears; teaching them early language skills and basic hygiene, safety and other practical tasks; playing games with them; helping with their schoolwork. But without viewing such interactions as the province of the ***collective***, Smith's idea of socialism is entirely compatible with the preservation of the family *sans* housework.

Why the ambiguity on a question of such central importance? The ISO appeals to young left-liberal idealists by peddling a version of "Marxism" tailored to their views and prejudices. This organization almost never takes a position on any question that is really unpopular in the American radical-liberal milieu. Young feminist-minded women would find the idea of family life without having to do housework quite attractive. But to give up their proprietary family home and their concern for only their "own" children? The petty-bourgeois audience that Smith is addressing would be appalled at the Bolshevik program for the transformation of daily life through collective modes of living. As Kollontai wrote:

> "The working woman, becoming a social fighter for the great cause of the freedom of workers, must learn to understand that old divisions need not exist. These are my children, and all my maternal concern, all my love, is for them. And these are your children, the neighbor's, and I have no concern with them. Let them be hungrier than mine, colder than mine, I have no concern for another's children! Now the worker-mother who is aware must learn not to make a distinction between yours and mine, but to remember that they are only *our* children, children of working, communist Russia." [emphasis in original]

In 1929, the Russian Communist Party (CP) was still calling for the withering away of the family, despite the rise to political power of a conservative bureaucratic caste led by J.V. Stalin five years earlier. But as we wrote in "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006), "By 1936-37, when the Russian CP's degeneration was complete, Stalinist doctrine pronounced this a 'crude mistake' and called for a 'reconstruction of the family on a new socialist basis'."

The Family as a Social Construct

Whereas Smith and Riddell falsely claim that the early Bolshevik regime supported the traditional role of women as primary caregivers for their young children, Goldman criticizes them for ***not*** doing so:

> "The Bolsheviks attached little importance to the powerful emotional bonds between parents and their children. They assumed that most of the necessary care for children, even infants, could be relegated to paid, public employees. They

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tended to slight the role of the mother-child bond in infant survival and early childhood development, although even a rudimentary acquaintance with the work of the prerevolutionary foundling homes would have revealed the shockingly low survival rates for infants in institutional settings and the obstacles to healthy child development."

This analogy is entirely invalid. The treatment and fate of young children in the impoverished foundling homes of tsarist Russia can by no means be compared to collective childcare in a revolutionary society. A workers state, especially in an economically advanced country, would have the human and material resources to provide far better care for young children in all respects than a mother in the setting of a private, family household.

Furthermore, the Bolsheviks put great emphasis on the health and well-being of mother and child. The 1918 Labor Code provided at least one paid 30-minute break every three hours to feed a baby. The maternity insurance program implemented the same year provided for a fully paid maternity leave of eight weeks, nursing breaks and factory rest facilities for women on the job, free pre- and postnatal care and cash allowances. With its networks of maternity clinics, consultation offices, feeding stations, nurseries and mother and infant homes, this program was perhaps the single most popular innovation of the Soviet regime among women.

Feminists in the U.S. and elsewhere usually denounce the proposition that "biology equals destiny" as an expression of male chauvinism. Yet Goldman makes the assumption that women, or for that matter men, who are not biologically related to infants and young children cannot develop the same protective feelings toward them as their birth mother. Parents of adopted children may well argue with this idea. But modern adoption practices in the U.S. are also based on the concept that only in a "family"—be it biological mother and father, adoptive parents or gay or transgender parents—can a child get the proper care and love. Far from being a fact of nature, the idea that raising children can succeed only in a family setting is a *social construct*.

When people lived as hunter-gatherers (the vast majority of the 200,000 years our species has been around), the band or tribe, not the "pair bond," was the basic unit of human existence. One example from the not-too-distant past comes from the testimony of 17th-century Jesuit missionaries among the Naskapi hunting people of Labrador. As related by Eleanor Burke Leacock in her fine introduction to Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (International Publishers, 1972), Jesuits complained about the sexual freedom of Naskapi women, pointing out to one man that "he himself was not sure that his son, who was there present, was his son." The Naskapi's reply is telling: "Thou hast no sense. You French people love only your own children; but we love all the children of our tribe."

The disappearance of classes and private property under communism would lead inevitably to the full freedom of sexual relations and to the disappearance of any concept of legitimacy or illegitimacy. Everyone would have access to the fullest benefits of society by virtue of being a citizen of the international Soviet.

The Family as Carrier of Bourgeois Ideology

Vogel and Smith implicitly limit the concept of domestic labor to physical activities. Thus Smith writes: "The day-to-day responsibilities of family still center around feeding, clothing, cleaning, and otherwise caring for its members, and that responsibility still falls mainly on women." But raising children for their future entry into the labor market is not like raising calves and lambs for the livestock market. The reproduction of human labor power has not only a biological but also a *social*, i.e., *ideological* character. Taking a child to church or religious instruction is also a form of domestic labor, in its own way important for the maintenance of the capitalist system; likewise, taking a child to a movie that glorifies "family values," patriotism, etc. The family is the primary institution through which bourgeois ideology in its various forms is transmitted from one generation to the next.

AP

Corbis

Bourgeois values of patriotism, religiosity are drilled into children from early age.

The ABC of Communism (1919), written by two leading Bolsheviks, Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, explained that the tiny minority of capitalists cannot dominate the working class solely through the use of physical force and coercion carried out by the police and military. The maintenance of the capitalist system also involves the force of ideas:

> "The bourgeoisie is well aware that it cannot control the working masses by the use of force alone. It is necessary that the workers' brains should be completely enmeshed as if in a spider's web.... The capitalist State maintains specialists to stupefy and subdue the proletariat; it maintains bourgeois teachers and professors, the clergy, bourgeois authors and journalists."

Viktor Bulla

Lenin consults with veteran Bolshevik Elena Stasova at break during Second Congress of Communist International, 1920.

Bukharin and Preobrazhensky pointed to three main institutions by which bourgeois ideological domination is maintained: the educational system, the church and the press, with the mass media today also including films, television and the Internet.

In the advanced capitalist countries, where children are widely viewed as the property of their parents, the family has a different relationship to each of those institutions. From the age of five or six, children are legally required to attend school (public or private), and younger children often go to preschool. From the time that they're toddlers, children watch television, with some parents, usually mothers, controlling which programs they watch. Unlike school teachers and TV producers, clergymen have no such automatic direct access to young children—in the U.S. and elsewhere, the parents decide whether or not their children are subjected to religious indoctrination. At least initially, such indoctrination is imposed upon children against their subjective desires. There probably isn't a four- or five-year-old on the planet who would not rather play games with other children than attend religious services.

Consider a ten-year-old boy whose parents are practicing Catholics. He has been taken to church for as long as he can remember. He has attended Catholic school either in place of public school or supplementary to it. He has heard prayers said before meals at home and experienced multiple expressions of religious belief in everyday domestic life. Such a child may well adhere to Catholic beliefs and doctrines at least until a later stage in life when free of parental authority.

Conversely, consider a ten-year-old whose parents are irreligious. His knowledge of religion is limited to what he has learned in public school, occasional information gleaned from TV programs and movies and discussions with other children who are religious-minded. Such a child will almost certainly be irreligious. But being irreligious does not immunize a child from other, likely "progressive" forms of bourgeois ideology. A child raised by parents who subscribe to "secular humanism" will likely adhere to political liberalism in the U.S. or social democracy in West Europe and possibly intellectual elitism. There is also a current of atheistic libertarianism (associated with Ayn Rand) that glorifies self-centered individualism and "free market" capitalism. Religion is not the only form of reactionary bourgeois ideology.

The family oppresses children as well as women, and it is plenty deforming to men's consciousness as well. This basic social truth is ignored if not denied by both liberal and "socialist" feminists. For them to recognize that the oppression of children is intrinsic to the family would mean (horror of horrors!) criticizing the socially conditioned behavior of women in their role as mothers. Professed Marxists like Vogel and Smith, who propagate the thesis that domestic labor is the basis of women's oppression, implicitly treat mothers as only doing good for their children.

Against the Sexual Repression of Children

While most feminists would condemn the physical abuse of children, they are effectively indifferent to psychological abuse. To take one example, the children of fundamentalist Christian parents (whether Catholic or Protestant) suffer mental torture in believing that they will go to hell if they behave badly.

Far more widespread and psychologically damaging is the sexual repression of children extending well into adolescence. Capitalist society is geared to penalize the expression of sexuality in children from birth. Even the most enlightened parents cannot shield children from the anti-sex, moralistic ideology that pervades American society—everywhere from the pink- and blue-themed aisles at Toys "R" Us and the ban on public nudity to the demonization of any sexual activity by children, including masturbation. As infants' and toddlers' primary caregivers, mothers more than fathers begin the process of that sexual repression, teaching children to feel shame about their bodies and to suppress their natural curiosity.

August Bebel, a principal leader of German Social Democracy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, comes off as a radical sexual libertarian compared to today's "socialist feminists." In *Woman Under Socialism* (1879), he insisted:

> "*The satisfaction of the sexual instinct is as much a private concern as the satisfaction of any other natural instinct.* None is therefor accountable to others, and no unsolicited judge may interfere.... The simple circumstance that all bashful prudery and affectation of secrecy regarding natural matters will have vanished is a guarantee of a more natural intercourse of the sexes than that which prevails to-day." [emphasis in original]

One can read hundreds of pages written by today's "socialist feminists" without finding any argument that a socialist society will enable everyone to better fulfill their sexual needs and desires.

The Communist Future

Under communism, people will be genuinely and truly *free* to shape and reshape their interpersonal relations. Of course, this freedom is not absolute. Humanity cannot transcend its biological makeup and relation to the natural environment. Communist man and woman, too, will grow old and die. Neither can mankind sweep the slate totally clean and build society anew. Communist humanity will inherit for good and ill the accumulated cultural heritage of our species. We cannot know the sexual practices of communist society because these will be determined in the future. Any projection, much less prescription, would carry the imprint of attitudes, values and prejudices shaped by a repressive class society.

A fundamental difference between Marxists and feminists, whether liberal or professed socialist, is that our ultimate goal is not gender equality as such but rather the progressive development of the human species as a whole. The communal raising of children under conditions of material abundance and cultural richness will produce human beings whose mental capacities as well as psychological well-being will be vastly superior to people in this impoverished, oppressive and class-divided society. In a 1932 speech on the Russian Revolution, "In Defence of October" (*Fourth International*, July-August 1947), Leon Trotsky said:

> "It is true that humanity has more than once brought forth giants of thought and action, who tower over their contemporaries like summits in a chain of mountains. The human race has a right to be proud of its Aristotle, Shakespeare, Darwin, Beethoven, Goethe, Marx, Edison, and Lenin. But why are they so rare? Above all, because almost without exception, they came out of the upper and middle classes. Apart from rare exceptions, the sparks of genius in the suppressed depths of the people are choked before they can burst into flame. But also because the processes of creating, developing and educating a human being have been and remain essentially a matter of chance, not illuminated by theory and practice, not subjected to consciousness and will....
>
> "Once he has done with the anarchic forces of his own society man will set to work on himself, in the pestle and the retort of the chemist. For the first time mankind will regard itself as raw material, or at best as a physical and psychic semi-finished product. Socialism will mean a leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom in this sense also, that the man of today, with all his contradictions and lack of harmony, will open the road for a new and happier race." ■

Australia: Fighting for a Revolutionary Perspective

Class Struggle and the 1975 Ouster of the Whitlam Government

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist *No. 225 (Autumn 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia.*

Australasian **SPARTACIST**

This year marks 40 years since the Labor government led by Gough Whitlam was dismissed by the English Queen's representative, the then governor-general, Sir John Kerr. The ouster of Whitlam in November 1975 brought to a head a political crisis that was developing in this country during a decade of intensifying social and class struggle. From the mid-1960s, unfolding social revolution in Vietnam sparked massive protests against the Vietnam War and conscription and, combined with powerful proletarian actions, ignited youth and other layers of the population to take up broader struggles, including the fight for Aboriginal rights. Women were propelled into the fight for equal pay and abortion rights, against the deep male chauvinism characteristic of Australian capitalist society.

Today's left-inclined workers and youth, who have come to politics in a world shaped by capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and one-sided class war against workers and oppressed, would find it useful to study the lessons of this period of heightened struggle. Four decades ago, with the proletariat demonstrating an instinctive desire to fight against the capitalist rulers and threatening to break out of the confines of bourgeois parliamentarism, the social-democratic misleaders in the trade unions and ALP [Australian Labor Party] adapted to the prevailing mood and stood far to the left of today's very right-wing ALP regimes. However, the purpose of such left-wing posturing by the leadership was to co-opt the more advanced and restive layers of the proletariat and behead any challenge to capitalist stability and profits. While some declared themselves socialists and even communists, in reality these misleaders constituted a left-reformist layer within the workers movement, whose actual program was limited to ameliorating the worst excesses of capitalist rule. As a consequence they were all the more dangerous an obstacle to the historic interests of the working class.

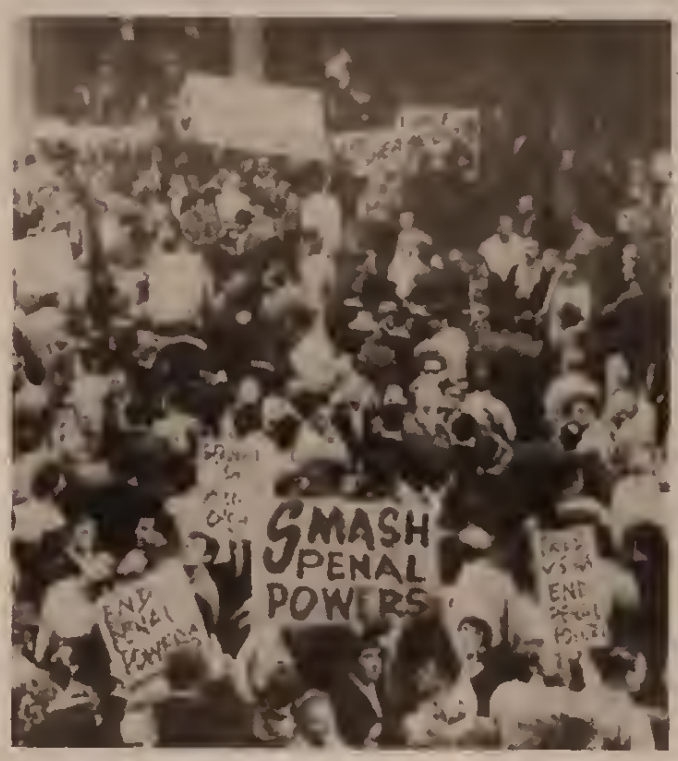
The turmoil of this period created openings for our small Trotskyist group, then known as the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ), to connect with advanced workers and seek to raise their political consciousness through revolutionary propaganda and intelligent tactics. A key element of our intervention was to debunk the lie promoted by Laborites of all stripes that workers can achieve their needs through the parliamentary road. As Lenin wrote in his seminal work, *The State and Revolution* (1917), "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism...." Through hard political combat we fought to win the best elements among the left and proletariat to the perspective of building an internationalist revolutionary Marxist party to fight for socialist revolution.

Whitlam's ALP Enlisted to Rein in Proletarian Struggles

The Whitlam Labor government came to office in 1972. Not only was this a period of heightened proletarian struggle in Australia but also internationally. These years saw mass working-class upheavals shake France in 1968, Italy in 1969 and Portugal in 1974-75. The absence of genuine revolutionary Trotskyist leadership and the betrayals by the pro-Moscow Stalinist Communist parties and social democrats resulted in these struggles being defeated.

In Australia, this period saw the biggest upsurge in trade-union unrest since World War I. Class struggle exploded with intensity in 1969, with a near general strike in Victoria. The struggle was ignited over the jailing of Victorian Tramways Union official and supporter of the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) [CPA(ML)], Clarrie O'Shea, for defying the government's anti-strike penal powers and refusing to pay Arbitration Court fines. It saw 200,000 workers walk off the job in Victoria and 150,000 in NSW [New South Wales state] the day after O'Shea's imprisonment. Ultimately over one million workers in all states struck to demand the release of O'Shea. A *Sun-Herald* correspondent reported that "Demonstrations I have seen accompanying the strikes have been the most intense since the coal strike in 1949." A general strike was only averted when O'Shea was released from prison after his fines were anonymously paid. The workers' actions succeeded in shelving the penal powers for a decade. This victory combined with the radical-sounding anti-imperialist rhetoric of the CPA(ML) attracted many youth, then breaking to the left of the ALP, to the Maoists who were also leading the most militant wing of the anti-war movement.

From the mid-1960s strikes began to take on a political colouration. The New South Wales branch of the Builders Labourers Federation solidarised with the struggles of oppressed groups such as prisoners, gays, women and Aborigines. On several occasions CP [Communist Party of Australia] and CPA(ML)-led maritime unions struck to defend opponents of the Vietnam War caught in the crosshairs of state repression. The Seamen's Union refused on occasions to ship armaments and ammunition to Vietnam thus concretely impeding the imperialist war against the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. This war ended in 1975 with the defeat of the imperialist forces and their South Vietnamese puppet regime by the troops of the North Vietnamese Army and southern peasant-based National Liberation Front (NLF), leading to the overturn of capitalist rule in South Vietnam and the formation of a unified workers state, albeit bureaucratically deformed from inception by the rule of a parasitic nationalist Stalinist caste.



Quality Press

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Late 1960s, early '70s saw outburst of class struggle in Australia. Left: Sydney protest in support of Victorian Tramways Union leader Clarrie O'Shea, jailed in 1969 for defying government anti-strike measures. Below: Maritime workers march against the Vietnam War.

Mirroring the development of a defeatist wing of the American ruling class, who were spooked by spiralling defeats particularly after the North Vietnamese/NLF's 1968 Tet Offensive, sections of the Australian ruling class were also increasingly looking for a way to extract themselves from that losing war. Suffering humiliating routs on the battlefield, the bourgeoisie were doubtless concerned that the military victories of the Vietnamese forces were having a radicalising effect on the proletariat at home. By 1971 the number of working days lost to strike activity in Australia had risen to over three million—over 400 percent higher than in 1967. That same year, a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial warned that "in parts of Australia...we are approaching a situation intolerably close to industrial anarchy." Significantly, shop stewards committees, which embraced immigrant worker militants, were playing a more prominent role somewhat independent of the older, more conservative Australian-born leaders who made up the majority of union officialdom.

The Australian capitalist class resolved that measures needed to be taken to contain proletarian struggles. The deeply conservative Liberal/Country Party Coalition, which had been in power for 23 years [mainly under prime minister Robert Menzies], was at that time incapable of doing so and moreover stood in the way of modernisation. Thus a decisive section of the Australian capitalist rulers, including media magnate Rupert Murdoch, promoted the reformist Whitlam-led Labor Party in the 1972 federal elections.

From its formation in the 1890s, the ALP has been a bourgeois workers party: a party based on the mass of organised workers but led by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy and their parliamentary counterparts, whose role is to act as political police for the bourgeoisie in the labour movement. In his June 1913 article "In Australia," Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin described the leaders of the ALP as "trade union officials, everywhere the most moderate and 'capital-serving' element...." Through this mechanism, in times of crisis, such as the two world wars of last century, the ALP has served the ruling class by presiding over the capitalist order and keeping the working class in check.

No less in the 1970s, it was Whitlam's job to lull the workers and when necessary discipline them in order to return to capitalist business as usual. It helped that he was a known quantity. Whitlam earned kudos from the bourgeoisie for purging the "Socialist Left" from the Victorian branch of the ALP in 1970. Devoted to bourgeois parliamentarism, Whitlam made it clear in the lead up to the 1972 elections that taxes on the wealthy would not rise and that he had no intention to nationalise anything. Whitlam was also an enthusiastic and eloquent purveyor of the reformist illusion that the capitalist state could be reformed to meet the interests of the masses. He was aided in his efforts to hoodwink workers by the misleaders in the trade-union bureaucracy.

Refurbishing the Image of Australian Imperialism

With the ALP under pressure from its proletarian base, the bourgeoisie was prepared to concede, for a time, some concrete reforms in order to placate workers and the oppressed. In his book *A Secret Country* (1989), John Pilger captures the whirlwind of change that accompanied Whitlam's ascension to power:

> "Conscription was ended immediately and the last Australian troops were ordered home from Vietnam. Young men imprisoned for draft evasion were freed unconditionally. The Federal Government assumed responsibility for Aboriginal health, education and welfare and the first land rights legislation was drafted....

> "Equal pay for women was introduced. Wages, pensions and unemployment benefits rose. A national health service was established, open to all. Spending on education was doubled and university and college fees abolished. Censorship was ended and the divorce laws reformed, with the establishment of the world's first 'family courts.' Legal aid became a universal right. A range of cultural initiatives for Aborigines, women and immigrants were encouraged and funded; 'access' and ethnic radio networks were set up."

Notorious for its official White Australia policy, Australia had long been viewed with distrust by Southeast Asian and Pacific Island countries. By the mid-to-late 1960s "White Australia" was an impediment to Australian business interests, not least with Japan, the growing imperialist economic powerhouse in the region. Thus, Whitlam helped to end the ALP's explicit embrace of "White Australia," one of its founding tenets. And he sought to modernise insular Menzies-era Australian capitalism, including through acting with greater "independence" from its U.S. big brother vis-à-vis moves to engage in Asia. Formal independence was granted to Papua New Guinea and immigration for Asian and Pacific islanders was liberalised. Whitlam also gave diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China. These mainly cosmetic moves were designed to project a more tolerant and multiracial Australia in order to promote the interests of Australian imperialism.

Some of Whitlam's reforms, such as no-fault divorce and relatively free health care and education, greatly benefited working people. However, as is always the case under capitalism, reforms are only ever a pallid and highly reversible glimpse of what will be achievable once workers have overthrown the capitalist system. As we wrote at the time: "While significant, these changes hardly touch the real needs of the masses and in fact disarm them by helping to prepare the way for the very harsh measures Whitlam will be forced to institute for the benefit of Australian capitalism" ("Capital's Labor Trustee: Australian Labor Party Elected," *WV* No. 17, March 1973).

Whitlam's Usefulness Comes to an End

With the onset of a sharp global economic downturn in 1974 capitalist rulers around the world made efforts to increase the rate of exploitation of the proletariat. This recession was also marked by rising unemployment and spiralling inflation, accelerated by the October 1973 OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) cartel's decision to raise crude oil prices by 70 percent. The market price for oil soon quadrupled and the effects were felt in Australia by early 1974 as escalating transport costs filtered through the economy. Inflationary pressures sparked proletarian struggles for higher wages. Already in 1973 Whitlam had attempted to rein in wages by putting forward a referendum for state control of wages and prices. This referendum was resoundingly defeated not least due to widespread opposition from the working class.

Gloaguen/Gamma-Rapho

North Vietnamese troops take Saigon, 30 April 1975. Military victory over imperialists and South Vietnamese puppet regime overthrew capitalist rule and established deformed workers state.

Forced to an early federal election in May 1974, the ALP was re-elected with a slightly reduced majority. The Labor caucus attempted to revive their standing amongst workers through electing "left" leader and prominent anti-war campaigner Jim Cairns as deputy prime minister. While that year's September budget delivered a few paltry social welfare reforms it did nothing to arrest the growing unemployment and erosion of wages caused by inflation. Whitlam, with the connivance of then ACTU [Australian Council of Trade Unions] head Bob Hawke and other prominent union leaders, continued to push for wage restraint while arguing that some reforms would have to be wound back. Despite deep-set illusions in the ALP, many unions rejected the Laborite tops' messages of restraint and cutbacks, and fought to defend the wages and living standards of their members. Working days lost to strike activity in 1974 were double that of 1971. In 1974-75 workers' struggles succeeded in offsetting inflation as average wages grew by 28.7 percent. Faced with growing unemployment, inflation, a strike wave, and a decline in popularity, by late 1974 the ALP government's failure to protect profits by holding down wages led it to adopt an anti-strike campaign, with the minister for labour accusing unions of "bloody-mindedness" and causing "near anarchy."

But for the bosses it was too little, too late. Ultimately the Whitlam government's inability to stymie working-class struggles would become its epitaph. As we wrote in *Australasian Spartacist* No. 25, November 1975:

> "Although the ALP tops have been ever more slavish in boot-licking devotion to business and profit it has not been enough. Wage indexation has not produced the results required. The bosses have increasingly resorted to lockouts, provoked strikes, attempted speedup, and attacked union rights in a campaign of attrition against union strength. For the bosses the time has come for the government to put its foot down; but the Labor Government's strategy of restraining the working class through the sell-out union bureaucrats has not been effective enough. The L/NCP [Liberal/National Country Party coalition], uninhibited by any ties to the unions, will be prepared to launch a crackdown on the unions at every opportunity. Finally, in recession conditions the ruling class cannot afford even the ALP's piddling reforms."

The CIA and British intelligence services played a role in Whitlam's ouster (see "The CIA, the Queen's Agent and the Man Who Got in the Way: Gough Whitlam, 1916-2014," [*WV* No. 1061, 6 February]). On the face of it this might seem odd since Whitlam had long proven himself a staunch defender of the U.S./Australia alliance, signed in 1951 during Cold War I against the Soviet Union. Whitlam's loyalty to this counterrevolutionary alliance included backing the construction of the U.S. spy base at North-West Cape in 1963, congratulating the then Indonesian president Suharto after he had overseen the mass slaughter that destroyed the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965-66, and backing the war in Vietnam. On the right wing of the ALP, he only switched his position and called for troops out of Vietnam in 1968, when it became obvious that the imperialist forces were losing. While the Whitlam government in 1972 was one of the first in the West to recognise the People's Republic of China, this measure was entirely in keeping with imperialist interests, occurring shortly before the sealing of the anti-Soviet U.S./China alliance.

As PM [Prime Minister], Whitlam first clashed with the U.S. administration after the U.S. carried out the bombing of Hanoi and the port of Haiphong in late 1972. Having been elevated to power on a wave of opposition to the war in Vietnam, Whitlam felt impelled to protest this barbaric war crime which killed some 1,600 people. His comments coincided with waterfront union bans against U.S. shipping. Despite Whitlam's assurances that his government was by no means anti-U.S., his dissent sparked a furious response from Washington. It was also revealed later that the CIA had become concerned by Whitlam's meddling with the U.S. government's highly secretive Pine Gap "communications" base near Alice Springs. Shortly before his sacking, Whitlam accused National Country Party leader, Doug Anthony, of being tainted by CIA money. He also claimed that Anthony's friend, Richard Stallings, who supervised the construction of Pine Gap, had been a CIA agent, the obvious implication being that there was more to Pine Gap than "communications." Later revelations exposed Pine Gap as an anti-Soviet spy base, which was key to longstanding U.S. plans for a nuclear first strike against the USSR. The question of the bases underscored the importance of our internationalist Trotskyist fight "at home" for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. Revelations also pointed to the CIA filtering funds to the Liberal and Country Parties as well as infiltrating some unions, with CIA money linked to the virulently anti-Communist National Civic Council of B.A. Santamaria and right-wing union officials associated with it.

Alongside the growing economic instability, these factors, combined with the ALP Attorney-General Lionel Murphy's police raid on ASIO [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation] headquarters in early 1973 and the links of some Labor lefts to unions influenced by the CPA or its Maoist and pro-Moscow Stalinist spin-offs, were a cause of deep suspicion to both the U.S. and Australian ruling classes and their intelligence services. The pretext for Whitlam's sacking was a series of "scandals" surrounding his government. The most spectacular was the so-called "loans affair" where the government attempted to raise a U.S. $4 billion loan for resource-based infrastructure projects from sources in the Middle East. The Opposition seized on this to claim government financial impropriety. It gave the L/NCP coalition, led by Malcolm Fraser, the trigger to use their numbers in the Senate to block the federal budget on 16 October 1975, thus denying the government financial supply. The "crisis" was resolved on 11 November when Governor-General Sir John Kerr, who had links with not only the British monarchy but also ASIO and the CIA, used the supposedly moribund "reserve powers of the crown" to withdraw Whitlam's

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Australian Department of Defense

Pine Gap facility, set up as anti-Soviet spy base, now repurposed to snoop on China.

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Australia...

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commission and install Fraser as the caretaker prime minister.

Proletarian Outpouring Against Whitlam's Dismissal

Following the blocking of supply and Whitlam's subsequent dismissal there was a tremendous outpouring of proletarian rage. Mass protests occurred. At different points docks across the country were shut down, rail networks were sporadically at a standstill, and building sites were idle. Storemen, meatpackers, miners, clothing workers, journalists, printers, teachers, office and carworkers, shipbuilders, metal and manufacturing workers all walked off the job at different points and often together. Their protests were joined by students.

Almost a week after blocking supply, Fraser called a public demonstration to rally support behind the L/NCP coalition. Outnumbered by a counter-demonstration of Labor supporters, Fraser was forced to retreat into parliament house without finishing his speech. There were multiple calls for a general strike by unions across a wide range of industries. The ACTU refused to take up these calls. Massive union shop stewards meetings, representing hundreds of thousands if not millions of workers, were held in Melbourne, Sydney and Brishane. Proletarian outrage was immense. But this wasn't just about the ousting of the Whitlam government. It was about the workers seeking to defend their organisations and livelihoods against an avowedly right-wing, union-busting government that was hell-bent on stripping back Whitlam's reforms. As NSW State Secretary of the Federated Engine Drivers Union, Jack Cambourn, put it, "we are not going to strike to save [Gough], we are going to strike to save ourselves."

The bourgeoisie and their pro-capitalist Laborite representatives in the union movement were becoming increasingly fearful. Former Liberal Party leader, Bill Snedden, later opined that "the peace of the country was threatened and there could have been an insurrection." Immediately after Whitlam's sacking there was a clear consensus across the bourgeois political spectrum that despite the manner of Whitlam's removal it was vital to restore faith in the parliamentary system. From the day of his dismissal Whitlam played a prominent role in channeling anger into the ballot box. Speaking from the steps of federal parliament Whitlam called on an angry crowd of supporters who had spontaneously gathered there to "maintain your rage...until polling day."

With so many workers in the unions and in ALP branches straining to take all-out strike action, the Laborite misleaders worked frantically to contain the movement in safe parliamentary channels. At a press conference immediately after the dismissal ACTU leader Hawke insisted that Whitlam had "no alternative hut to accept this amazing decision." He argued against a national strike, counselling that it "could unleash forces in Australia which we've never seen before." Showing his absolute devotion to bourgeois rule Hawke infamously implored workers to "cool it," declaring "we are on the edge of something terrible happening."

Proletarian militancy was at its height in Victoria. Defying Hawke's calls for restraint, some 30 left-wing unions in Melbourne unanimously voted for a half-day general strike on 14 November. Pre-existing fissures between the hardened anti-communist right wing and left wing in the labour movement were widening. Enter prominent CPA supporter and Metal Workers union official in Victoria, John Halfpenny. Widely popular for his left-sounding rhetoric, Halfpenny announced the decision to strike, declaring that if Hawke says "'do nothing' he will be swept aside by the angry mood of the people." Less than 24 hours later this highly skilled traitor covered for Hawke saying that the ACTU president had "clarified" his call to "cool it" as simply opposing indefinite strikes. Thus Halfpenny sought to put himself at the head of the struggle in order to derail it. With workers champing at the bit to take mass action Halfpenny declared, "We didn't create this crisis. Far from trying to disrupt society the slogans are to return to stability."

Australasian Spartacist

Spartacist banner at November 1975 rally in Sydney after British Queen's agent ousted Whitlam Labor Party government.

Despite Hawke and Halfpenny's calls for restraint and stability, on 14 November 400,000 workers struck in Victoria with 30-40,000 workers and students rallying in Melbourne's City Square. Hawke and other Labor leaders addressed the rally and it was left to Halfpenny to tell the angry crowd to leave before peak hour to avoid disrupting transport home! Here in the persons of Hawke and Halfpenny you had the right and left wings of Laborite reformism coming together to pour cold water on the militancy of workers and stabilise capitalist rule. Even so, some 15,000 reportedly refused to disperse instead marching to the stock exchange. Against the sell-out Labor-loyal tops, an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party with deep roots in the proletariat could have had a decisive impact.

Such a Leninist party will be built in this country by splitting the working-class base of the ALP from the pro-capitalist leadership, centrally through the political fight to replace the social-democratic union misleaders with a class-struggle leadership of the unions linked to a revolutionary workers party. In the process the most advanced layers of the proletariat will be broken from Laborite nationalism, loyalty to the capitalist state, and illusions in parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and won to the communist program and party.

The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

In the tumultuous events around Whitlam's dismissal, thousands of workers across the country were pushing for extra-parliamentary actions while simultaneously rallying behind the ALP, which they viewed as their political representation in the hallowed halls of parliament. In opposition to the Labor traitors and their left hangers-on, just prior to Whitlam's dismissal we warned:

> "Whitlam, Hawke and their reformist and centrist fellow travellers want the working class to believe that what is at stake is not a class conflict but the undemocratic character of the Senate and/or the Governor-General, the violation of constitutional conventions, etc. The abolition of the Senate and that vestigial remnant of past British imperialism, the Governor-General, would make the parliamentary system marginally more democratic; but *in essence* the vaunted 'democracy' of Parliament is pure sham and no number of reforms can change it. The bourgeoisie controls social wealth and Parliament serves its needs, as the political organ for working out how best to maintain and reinforce its class rule. It is democracy *for the capitalists*, and they will never allow it to be used against their basic interests.
>
> —"For a General Strike to Keep the Liberal Union Bashers Out!" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 25, November 1975

Following Whitlam's dismissal, we headlined "Whitlam/Hawke Sabotage Workers' Defence" (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 26, 25 November 1975). Putting forward the call for a defensive general strike to kick Fraser out, we also raised a series of demands based on the *Transitional Program*, the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International. In the face of growing unemployment and the government's attempts at a wage freeze we called to "Smash the indexation wage freeze and Labor budget cuts!" and demanded "an immediate 35-hour week at full pay for all workers and a full, unconditional cost-of-living adjustment to all wages!" Against the Laborite fraud of channeling workers' struggles into the capitalist courts we called to "Abolish the arbitration system!" Emphasising that the capitalist rulers' stranglehold on society and exploitative rule must be hroken by taking industry out of their hands we demanded: "Open the hooks of the corporations! Workers control of hiring! Nationalise basic industry and financial institutions under workers' control—no compensation!" We declared, "Not the bosses' parliament hut a workers' government!"

Linking workers' desire to get rid of the Fraser government with the need for a workers government, alongside the call for a defensive general strike we also prominently raised the slogan, "For an ALP/ACTU government pledged to expropriate the capitalist class!" This slogan sought to confront workers with the perspective of a government that was both ***socially*** and ***structurally*** at variance with a bourgeois parliamentary regime—i.e., based exclusively on the organisations of the workers movement and incorporating wholesale (extra-parliamentary) defensive organisations of the working class. This demand, along with the call for a general strike, sought to exacerbate the contradictions between the aspirations and objective interests of the working class, centrally organised in the trade unions, and the policies and actions of their misleaders.

Ultimately the purpose behind sharpening this inner differentiation would be to politically destroy the ALP through splitting it into its pro-capitalist and proletarian elements, the latter being organised or led by a Leninist party. Through our intervention we aimed to break workers and leftist youth from Laborism and bourgeois parliamentarism, pointing them in the direction of a fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. As we explained at the time, the capitalist state machine—at its core the military, police, prison system and courts, "must be smashed—and replaced with a profoundly democratic workers state based on workers' own organisations to expropriate the capitalist class."

In putting forward the demand for a defensive general strike we wrongly, however, included in our propaganda the call to "restore the Labor Government" (and earlier, "to keep the Labor Government in power"). A political general strike, no matter how limited and defensive, necessarily would have challenged Laborite parliamentarism. Yet, the call to "restore the Labor Government" limited in advance the outcome of the general strike to re-establishing the widely discredited Whitlam government—at a time when the futility of parliamentary reformism had just been so devastatingly exposed. It gave a form of political support to a ***capitalist*** government, echoing the position of our reformist opponents, who masquerade as socialists and have a policy of strategic support to Labor and support bourgeois governments.

The call to "restore the Labor Government" thus ran counter to the entire revolutionary thrust of our intervention, including our demand "For an ALP/ACTU government pledged to expropriate the capitalist class!", which is not without historical precedent in the revolutionary workers movement. For example, French and Greek Trotskyists raised similar calls in 1945-46 in the unstable conditions of post-war Europe. Also in this tradition, albeit under very different circumstances, was Lenin's short-lived offer to the Russian Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (SRs) in September 1917. If they agreed to form a government independent of the bourgeoisie and on the basis of their majority in the soviets, Lenin argued in "On Compromises," the Bolsheviks would (for the moment) refrain from using revolutionary methods to oust them. The Mensheviks instead embraced the counterrevolutionary bourgeois forces leading to them being swept aside in the Bolshevik October Revolution, which created a victorious workers state.

In calling for a general strike and an "ALP/ACTU government" we were also guided by the tactics put forward by our U.S. comrades during the 1974 crisis in Britain. In "Why We Call for a General Strike in Britain Now" (*WV* No. 39, 1 March 1974), we argued for a limited, defensive general strike against the Heath Tory government's attacks, concluding with the call, "Oust the Tory Government! For a Labour Party/TUC [Trades Union Congress] Government Pledged to a Socialist Program of Expropriating the Capitalist Class!"

As with the "ALP/ACTU" slogan, the "Labour Party/TUC" slogan was a way to propagandistically address the question of power. It sought to intersect the consciousness of the proletariat in motion, pointing to the need for a government of workers' organisations and proletarian rule. As the article on the British crisis soberly explained, a general strike poses the question of state power and can easily lead to a revolutionary situation. Marxists do not play at revolution. The leadership of the British labour movement, like its counterpart in Australia, was consciously anti-revolutionary and would betray a general strike if it seriously challenged capitalist state power. Thus, taking account of the objective need for a general strike, the illusions workers still had in British Labourism, and the treacherous leadership of the working class, we explained:

> "A general strike cannot at this point be organized in opposition to or over the heads of the TUC, the established union leadership. On the other hand it would be criminal for a revolutionary organization to accept, unchallenged, this leadership of the TUC—of proven, professional class collaborators—during a general strike. It is necessary to organize directing bodies for the general strike that would allow the masses to check and frustrate the policies of the TUC, that would go towards becoming a kind of dual power within the general strike movement."

Similarly in Australia in 1975 there existed a basis to aggressively propagandise for widening the power and authority of the shop stewards committees to organise and deepen the strike movement, shifting the axis from the union tops to the most advanced and militant layers of the working class. This in turn could have opened the potential for higher forms of proletarian organisation such as broader workers councils or soviets.

In reviewing our intervention into the tumultuous events surrounding the fall of the Whitlam government, we of the Spartacist League of Australia, a section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), are fighting to politically arm the cadre of a future Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party, part of a reforged Fourth International. It is only when the international working class takes power and institutes a collectivised and planned economy on a global scale that a future of abundance, free from exploitation, racist oppression, women's oppression and war, will be guaranteed. ***For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!*** ■

Amtrak...

(continued from page 1)

disaster, the Republican-led House Appropriations Committee voted to slash a further $250 million from Amtrak's budget.

Amtrak gets off cheap for the injury and death resulting from its unsafe operations, with a 1997 federal law capping payouts at $200 million per accident. Meanwhile, the lives of train crews as well as passengers are put at risk by deteriorating and antiquated equipment. A retired Amtrak engineer recently told *Workers Vanguard*: "Mechanical failures of rail systems occur routinely. Speedometers fail to register the correct speed or just stop working all together. Brakes can go 'soft,' making it difficult to make proper stops. All-important signals can 'drop in your face' from a 'proceed' indication to a 'stop' indication. Automatic switches can fail."

Amtrak was established as a public corporation through a 1970 federal law that separated off the highly unprofitable passenger service from the ailing rail companies. As is typical in so-called bailouts, the government nationalized the loss-making portion of industry while allowing the capitalists to reorganize and again make profits hand over fist. Despite the spin-off of Amtrak, freight and passenger trains continue to share the tracks of the Northeast Corridor and across the nation, leading to a number of deadly collisions.

In recent years, the consequences of corner-cutting by the freight lines have been most dramatically shown in oil train disasters like the 2013 Quebec train explosion, which killed 47 people and leveled much of downtown Lac-Mégantic. The Department of Transportation estimates that there will be ten derailments a year of trains hauling crude oil or ethanol. Three such accidents have already occurred so far this year in the U.S. Oil shipments pass through hundreds of counties and dozens of major metropolitan areas on poorly maintained tracks and in the majority of cases in inadequate tank cars. Of course, fossil fuels and other hazardous materials need to be transported but that must be done safely, not by the cheapest means.

Safe, efficient and affordable mass transit should be considered a necessary public service. But capitalism—under which the capitalist class, a tiny handful of people, extracts tremendous wealth by exploiting the working class, centrally in the factories, mines, and transport system—is hardly rational. For the bourgeoisie, maximizing short-term profit matters above all else. Thus, they let infrastructure rot away while gutting public services like health care and education.

AP

June 2014: Striking commuter rail workers in Philadelphia man picket line shortly before President Obama forced them back to work.

Whenever a major disaster strikes, Democratic politicians give lip service to putting more money into the nation's railroads. But the fact remains that the country invests far less of its gross domestic product in rail than many of the world's capitalist powers, not to mention the Chinese deformed workers state with its extensive high-speed rail network. The arrogant U.S. imperialists think that they can allow their industrial base to wither and still maintain their military dominance over their imperialist rivals as well as neo-colonial peoples across the globe.

Capitalism makes industrial murder commonplace—from train wrecks to collapsing roads and bridges and exploding chemical plants, pipelines and electrical transformers—with the lives of workers and the public written off as mere collateral damage. Under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party, the social power of the proletariat could be unleashed to overthrow capitalist rule and establish a workers America. When the working class is in power, it will marshal the wealth and productive forces of society to rebuild the bridges, highways and factories, in addition to constructing decent housing and schools, opening the road to an egalitarian socialist society in which the needs of all are fulfilled. ■

ILWU...

(continued from page 12)

the terminals, a provision that is likely to be tied up for years in legal challenges. Many other jobs now claimed by the ILWU are currently done by other unions like the IBEW and IAM machinists. The new contract further opens the door for inter-union war on the docks by removing a "memorandum of understanding" over jurisdiction between the ILWU and the Teamsters, which has been in the ILWU's master contract since 1961.

Which Way Forward for the ILWU?

Amid the wreckage of other industrial unions, the ILWU still stands as a potential powerhouse of organized labor. This has nothing to do with the myth that until recently the ILWU maintained the militant traditions on which it was founded. Rather, it is the union's pivotal position in container shipping, where it has its hands on the levers of global trade, that has enabled it to maintain top wages and benefits. But that power has been sapped by the ILWU misleaders, who tie the workers' interests to the profitability of American capitalism and the electoral fortunes of the Democratic Party. It is precisely these class-collaborationist policies that have led to disaster for other former powerhouses of American labor.

Look no further than the ravaged remains of the United Auto Workers (UAW), which was once the symbol of industrial unionism in this country. After decades of give-backs, the union-busting 2009 bailout of the Detroit auto bosses, engineered by the Obama administration with the complicity of the UAW tops, slashed tens of thousands of jobs and halved the pay of new hires under a two-tier wage system. While the Big Three auto bosses are now swimming in profits, the pay of many UAW members is on a par with the starvation wages of the masses of unorganized manufacturing workers. It is this example that the shipping industry's publication of record, the *Journal of Commerce*, points to as a "model" for dealing with the ILWU.

In a report on its annual TPM conference of trans-Pacific global shipping companies, the *Journal of Commerce* (13 March) argued that the industry bosses must use the showdown over the contract at the West Coast ports to "spur action":

> "Congress and the White House must evaluate all options to avoid a repeat of the recent situation. Our economy respects collective bargaining, but surely we can find a better way to represent the interests of thousands without threatening the livelihoods of millions. Overall U.S. labor and management work well together, and there are multiple examples. Ford and the United Auto Workers found ways to work together during the depths of the recession, and Ford has emerged as one of the most successful and innovative car companies in the world. The stakeholders should settle for nothing less here.
>
> "Once we've modernized our labor contract system, we can get on with the work of modernizing our ports."

That is, over the mutilated body, and possibly the corpse, of the ILWU!

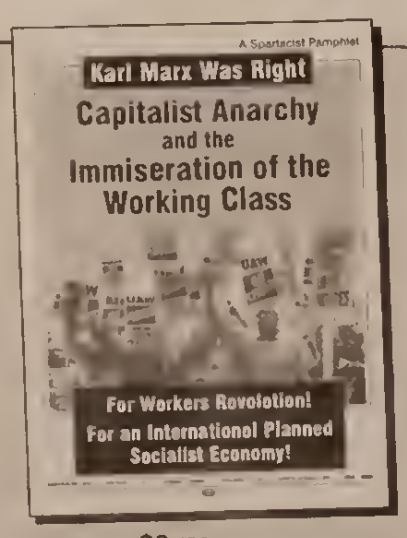
During the recent negotiations, the PMA manufactured a crisis in West Coast shipping, slashing work shifts and then blaming the union for gridlock at the ports. The aim was to get the Obama administration to intervene. The White House obliged by sending in its Labor Secretary, who threatened that if a deal wasn't made negotiations would move to Washington, D.C. Now, the head of the PMA, James McKenna, argues that the disruption of shipping during contract talks demonstrates that labor relations are not "sustainable." The truth of the matter is that the ILWU bureaucracy barely flexed the union's baby finger, the effect of minimal job actions paling in comparison to the congestion caused by the PMA's semi-lockout of the union.

Throughout the contract battle, the ILWU International ranted against "foreign-owned companies" for supposedly endangering the union and the American economy. Such patriotism only serves to shackle the union to the interests of U.S. imperialism, further isolating the ILWU from its class allies. Nowhere is it clearer that the workers' fight is international than on the docks, the portals to the world capitalist market. But rather than building a fighting alliance of all port unions both in the U.S. and internationally among the millions of workers in the global cargo chain, the ILWU misleaders have only further isolated and weakened the union.

To turn the tide for the union requires the understanding that workers have no interests in common with the bosses, their government and their political parties.

The answer to the threat of job loss due to automation is the fight for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. This would not only spread the available work around among longshoremen but also open the door to union jobs for the unemployed. There must be a massive drive to organize the tens of thousands of non-union workers at the ports, such as the port truckers, who are crucial to the movement of cargo. To build such working-class unity means combating the anti-immigrant racism that is used to enforce brutal exploitation, from port trucking to the vast inland warehouses.

The way forward lies in the struggle to forge a new leadership of the unions that will mobilize the workers to fight it out class against class. This is not simply a question of fighting to improve the present conditions of the workers under a system based on their exploitation but of ending the entire system of wage slavery, unemployment, poverty and war. For that the working class needs its own party, one that will arm the workers with the consciousness necessary to fight for their own class rule through proletarian socialist revolution. ■



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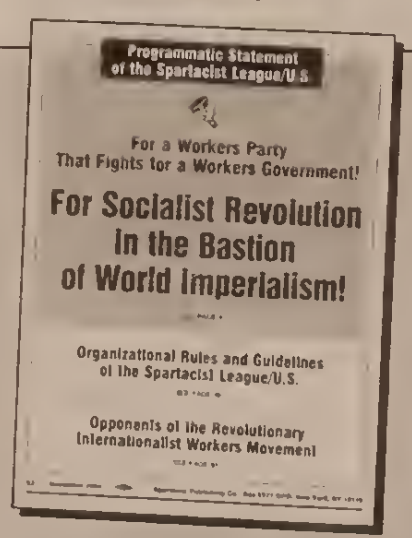

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WORKERS VANGUARD

ILWU Contract

Shipping Bosses Buy Labor Peace, Undermine Union

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) vnted up a new five-year contract with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) with 82 percent in favor. By the standards of union contracts these days, when it is considered a "victory" for the union simply to survive, the ILWU contract might appear a veritable pot of gold. In addition to a wage increase totaling $6.50 an hour by the contract's end and small increases in pensions, there were no cuts to the union's health plan, which has nn co-pay. This mcans that the ILWU will not have to shoulder the cost of the $150 millinn a year tax, mandated for so-called "Cadillac" plans under Obama's Affordable Care Act, which goes into effect in 2018. But as the old saying goes, all that glitters isn't gold.

Vast changes are pnsed in the shipping industry with the widening of the Panama Canal, the consolidation of shippers into ever-larger conglomerates operating ships able to carry up to almost double the number of containers and the installation of automated cranes and yard vehicles at the largest terminals in the U.S. Throwing a little money the ILWU's way, the PMA simply opted to buy itself snme time, and five years of labor peace, to see how things shape up. Meanwhile, the shipping bossos obtainod provisions that will continue tn erode the fighting capacity of the ILWU by heightening already existing divisions in the union. This includes contract language aimed at stopping the ILWU from honoring picket lines of its own members!

With the onset of container shipping, the union was divided in 1959 between A-men who get the first choice of available wnrk and B-men who only get to pick from among the unfilled jobs and are not accorded union membership. The widespread automation accompanying containerization slashed the workforce by a factor of ten and hrought yct another division, the "steady men." A layer of highly paid skilled workers, consisting largely of crane operators and mechanics, the steady men work directly for individual stevedoring companies, bypassing and undermining the ILWU hiring hall that is the embodiment of the union's power. Later, the workforce was further divided by a category of "casual" workers, who only get work when the A and B lists have been exhausted and have no benefits or union rights. These divisions are a danger to the very existence of the ILWU.

Under the new agrcement, casuals and other longshoremen with less work experience will not get the full wage increase, widening the divide hetween those first entering the industry and the A-men. Mechanics, on the nther hand, get a larger increase. It is also widely rumored that the walking bosses—who are organized in their nwn ILWU locals and are responsible for overseeing union work at different terminals—got a massive wage increase. If so, this is a blatant attempt to bribe the walking bosses into becoming company men. In 1919, a strike hy the Riggers' and Stevedores' Union, which represented longshore workers in San Francisco, was defeated and the union smashed after the gang bosses of that day split off from the union in the course of the strike. They formed the notorious "blue book" company union that ran the hated "shape up" system, under which corrupt gang bosses in league with the shippers called the shots on who would get work on the docks.

Longshore workers and their union allies literally laid down their lives in the class battles of 1934 to smash the "blue book" and win union control of hiring (see "Then and Now," *WV* Nos. 1050 and 1051, 8 August and 5 September 2014). The hiring hall and ILWU-run job dispatch were designed to equalize work opportunity among all longshoremen. This system has been increasingly subverted since the 1960-61 Mechanization and Modernization Agreement negotiated by the ILWU's historic leader, Harry Bridges. In addition, the coastwide unity of the ILWU has been undermined by unequal manning scales at different ports, creating resentment and tensions hetween ILWU locals as well as opening the door for the shipping bosses to play port against port.

Any struggle to restore the fighting power of the ILWU must begin with bringing the steady men back to the hall and championing union rights, pay and benefits at the highest rate for *all* longshore workers. Equal pay for equal work! For equal manning scales, at the highest level, at all West Coast ports!

Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!

A "letter of understanding" attached to the new agreement mandates that any picket line set up by an ILWU affiliate will not be considered "bona fide" unless representatives of the union and the shipping bosses hoth attend a meeting, within 24 hours, of the joint PMA-ILWU port labor relations committee. In short, this agreement sets up longshore workers in container shipping, where the union's power is concentrated, to scah on ILWU locals and affiliates that have far less leverage. A letter from the San Francisco regional director of the Inland Boatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU) addressed the fundamental labor principle at stake:

> "It is a basic right of our members to honor union picket lines. If any ILWU affiliates' members are willing to stand up and fight for their contract, and they choose to go out on strike, we can't let somebody outside our organization, union or employer, decide our picket line is not valid, and not worthy of support. Union members have a fundamental responsibility to honor other unions' picket lines—that is what we can do—that is what we have done."

It was the mobilization of the union's muscle in container shipping that led to the IBU's affiliation with the ILWU in 1980, following a West Coast port shutdown protesting the arrest of the then-president and secretary-treasurer of the IBU for refusing to obey a strikebreaking order. More recently, in 2011 ports throughout the Pacific Northwest were shut down to back up the fight of ILWU Local 21 in Longview, Washington, against a union-busting offensive by the giant Export Grain Terminal (EGT) consortium. But that action was short lived as the ILWU International bureaucracy retreated in the face of relentless state repression.

While the union preserved its jobs at the EGT terminal, driving out scabs from the Operating Engineers union, the resulting contract was a major setback. It set the stage for other grain terminal operatnrs in the Pacific Northwest to demand the same terms. Those outfits later succeeded in imposing a contract settlement that guts the union hiring hall and institutes deadly dangerous 12-hour shifts while eliminating provisions allowing the union to stop work when the safety of its members is threatened.

Throughout the showdown with the grain terminal bosses who locked out longshoremen fnr over a year, the ILWU leadership impotently stood by as scabs took over longshore jobs and uninns like the IBEW electrical workers crossed ILWU picket lines. To protest such backstabbing by AFL-CIO affiliates, ILWU International president Robert McEllrath opted to open the union up to further attacks by splitting from the AFL-CIO. In arguing for this suicidal move, McEllrath wrote that "the ILWU sees the honoring of picket lines as a fundamental principle that can't be compromised." In fact, ILWU bureaucrats have ordered their members to cross picket lines set up by the overwhelmingly immigrant and unorganized port truckers at bnth the L.A./Long Beach and Oakland ports.

Nor is the ILWU bureaucracy any stranger to the dirty game of pitting union against union in a scramble to defend its own shrinking turf. It was the sainted Harry Bridges who first gave the companies free rein to automate on terms favorable to the bosses, giving up thousands of johs in exchange for guaranteed income for the remaining lngshoremcn. With another round of automation looming, Bridges' heirs are hanking the union's future on claiming exclusive ILWU jurisdiction nver waterfront maintenance and repair johs.

This was reflected in the new contract langnage giving ILWU mechanics the right to inspect and repair chassis leaving

continued on page 11

AP (top), Almeida/NY Times

Top: Containers piled up at Los Angeles port in January as shipping bosses engaged in semi-lockout. Above: ILWU Local 13 hiring hall in L.A.

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1070

12 June 2015

South China Sea

Defend China Against U.S. Military Provocations!

U.S. imperialist military provocations against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state have grown increasingly hellicose since January, when the U.S. began regular spy flights over Chinese land reclamation and construction projects in the South China Sea's Spratly Islands. In mid May, the USS *Fort Worth*, one of the Navy's most modern combat ships, capable of hunting submarines and supporting amphibious landings, spent a week patrolling around the Chinese construction sites. The next week, a P-8 Poseidon advanced surveillance and anti-submarine aircraft carried a CNN reporting crew on a military flight over Fiery Cross Reef, where China has built an airstrip. The plane was sent to assert U.S. "freedom of navigation" through Chinese-controlled territory as the Chinese Navy issued *eight warnings* to "please go away."

Since the beginning of the year, Chinese dredging and construction have created 2,000 acres of new land, and are transforming seven shoals and reefs into islands with landing strips, an airport tower, a deepwater harbor and lighthouses. Developing reefs and islands in the South China Sea is an important defensive measure for China—the most powerful of the remaining countries where capitalism has been overthrown—against the U.S. and Japanese imperialists, who have been pursuing the military encirclement of China. As the Chinese Foreign Ministry has pointed out, these developments, located near a major shipping channel that is key for the Chinese economy, will improve navigational safety in the area and aid maritime search and rescue operations.

We defend China's development in the Spratlys against the U.S. and Japanese imperialists and their local regional capitalist lackeys, such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, all of whom have their own claims in the Spratlys. We also oppose the treacherous role being played by the Vietnamese Stalinist bureaucracy, which has aligned itself with U.S. imperialism against China.

Behind the imperialists' machinations is their drive to smash the Chinese deformed workers state and reimpose the unchecked capitalist exploitation and imperialist bondage that wracked the country before the 1949 Revolution. In 1949, a peasant-guerrilla army under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) overturned the rule of the capitalists and landlords and freed the country from foreign domination. The Revolution created a workers state with an economy centrally based on collectivized property forms. However, the workers state was deformed from its inception by the rule of a parasitic, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy.

U.S. Navy

USS *Carl Vinson* in South China Sea, along with American guided-missile cruiser and destroyer and Malaysian Royal Navy frigate, during joint exercises, May 8.

The establishment of the Chinese workers state was a historic gain for the working class internationally. We stand for the unconditional military defense of China and all the other deformed workers states—Vietnam, North Korea, Laos and Cuba. At the same time, we give no political support to the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies, which undermine the workers states by politically suppressing the proletariat and seeking to accommodate the imperialists.

Ominously, U.S. secretary of defense Ashton Carter insists that the U.S. will continue military operations in the Spratlys. In a consummate show of imperialist arrogance, on May 13 Carter declared: "We will remain the principal security power in the Asia-Pacific for decades to come." Thus he opened his tour of Asia aimed at negotiating military pacts, arms sales and increased U.S. troop presence in the region. Responding to Carter's spurious assertions about China's threat to free navigation, *CounterPunch* contributor Mike Whitney observed: "China has never blocked shipping lanes or seized boats sailing in international waters. Never. The same cannot be said of the United States that just recently blocked an Iranian ship loaded with humanitarian relief—food, water and critical medical supplies—headed to starving refugees in Yemen" (29 May).

Department of Defense

Hanoi, June 1: Vietnamese minister of defense with U.S. defense secretary Ashton Carter. Vietnamese Stalinist rulers criminally support imperialist moves against Chinese deformed workers state.

Contrary to the American propaganda barrage, the Chinese military has shown remarkable restraint while standing its ground. Imagine Washington's response if Chinese planes were carrying out surveillance over California's Santa Catalina Island! While increasing military pressure on China, U.S. imperialism is also bringing economic pressure to bear and promoting counterrevolutionary political forces like Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement.

The Japanese imperialists have aggressively joined the U.S.'s military provocations. The U.S. and Japanese ruling classes have their own distinct and competing interests, but they are united in their determination to bring capitalist counterrevolution to China. In April, the U.S. and Japan announced an agreement that will increase the involvement of the Japanese military in regional disputes. The U.S. has encouraged Japan to extend its naval patrols to the South China Sea, and in July, Japan will take part in the U.S. and Australian war games there.

What's at Stake in the South China Sea?

The Spratly Islands lie along the shipping route that connects East Asia to the Indian subcontinent and, beyond that, to the Near East. Half of the world's merchant tonnage passes along this route, including 80 percent of China's crude oil imports. Moreover, the South China Sea has proven reserves of at least seven billion barrels of petroleum and an estimated 900 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, as well as rich fisheries that account for some 10 percent of the world's catch. Although the Spratly archipelago consists of tiny specks of land, many of which are under water at high tide, and has no indigenous inhabitants, the islands are claimed by four capitalist countries as well as the Vietnamese and Chinese deformed workers states. Almost every one of these countries has carried out construction in the Spratlys.

Addressing disputes over the Spratlys and other islands in the South China Sea in the past, we wrongly stated: "We take no side in these territorial disputes and condemn in particular the criminal squabbling over fishing and exploration rights that have pitted the Stalinist regimes in Beijing and Hanoi against each other" ("U.S. Imperialism Tightens Military

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1965 U.S. Invasion of Dominican Republic

This past April 28 marked 50 years since Democratic U.S. president Lyndon B. Johnson launched a bloody invasion of the Dominican Republic. Tens of thousands of troops were dispatched to that Caribbean country to suppress a prerevolutionary situation and secure the interests of American sugar companies.

The Dominican Republic had heen brutally repressed by U.S.-backed dictator General Rafael Trujillo for over 30 years until his own CIA-trained aides humped him off in 1961, after he had become a liability to the imperialists. Juan Bosch, a liberal anti-Communist, was elected president in December 1962 and passed some mild land and labor reforms to quell popular unrest. But the reforms went too far for Washington, and Bosch was overthrown in a CIA-engineered military coup nine months later.

In the spring of 1965, a group of liberal army officers, including Colonel Francisco Caamaño, launched an insurrection to restore Bosch's 1963 constitution. Workers and students in the capital, Santo Domingo, joined the rebellion and organized committees that were potential organs of workers power. However, the Dominican masses were betrayed by their reformist leadership that tied them to Bosch instead of fighting for socialist revolution.

The uprising took place only a few years after the Cuban Revolution of 1959-60, in which Fidel Castro's peasant guerrilla forces ousted the regime of Fulgencio Batista and subsequently consolidated a deformed workers state with the expropriation of the capitalist class on the island. Moreover, in 1965, a civil war and social revolution were underway in Vietnam. The imperialists feared that the Dominican insurgency similarly threatened an overturn of capitalism.

The crushing of the rebellion by the U.S. invasion and 14-month occupation resulted in the deaths of 2,500 Dominicans; for years afterward, workers and leftists continued to be tortured and disappeared. In 1966, Joaquín Balaguer ascended to the presidency and ruled for most of the next 30 years, keeping the country safe for U.S. imperialist domination.

We reprint below a *Spartacist* special supplement issued on 6 May 1965, with one correction on the year of Trujillo's assassination. A follow-up article, "Reformist Betrayal," was printed in *Spartacist* No. 7 (September-October 1966).

* * *

The United States' bloody occupation of the Dominican Republic, by order of the Johnson Administration, has been unquestionably the most brazen of recent American military efforts to safeguard the interests of capitalism and maintain its oppression domestically and abroad. "For the first time since 1927, U.S. Marines have landed in a fermenting Caribbean country—and frankly, we're delighted," said the ultra-rightist N.Y. *Daily News* (30 April 1965) in an editorial entitled "Seems Like Old Times."

Hulton-Deutsch

American marines in Santo Domingo (above) during invasion to crush rebellion of Dominican masses (below) against U.S.-installed military dictatorship, 1965.

Hoepker/Magnum

Rebellion Led to Revolution

As in all colonial countries, the pro-U.S. Dominican ruling class is maintained by imperialism and in return administers the society for imperialism. The "liberal" wing, led by deposed President Juan Bosch, supports "reforms" and "democratic" trappings to stave off basic change and maintain social oppression. The liberals attempted a coup against the junta of the right wing, which realizes that only naked dictatorship can save imperialism and Dominican capitalism. It is significant that under *both* regimes the economic condition of the country deteriorated.

This crisis provided an opportunity for the Dominican workers and peasants to intervene, much as they had done in 1961 when Trujillo was assassinated. The fatal mistake of Bosch and Colonel Caamaño in banking upon mass support to help return the liberals to power was described by a pro-U.S. observer: "The leaders of the elements favoring the return of former President Juan Bosch were on the verge of taking over the government 24 hours after the revolution began.... *But then they let the revalutian get aut af their hands.*

I saw pro-Bosch forces handing out weapons to anyone who asked for them." (N.Y. *Journal-American*, 2 May 1965.) On 30 April, "U.S. officials in Santo Domingo and other observers believe no one is now in control...of the armed rebel bands, which include many young civilians." At this point, "American officials hinted strongly that it would be necessary for American troops to occupy Santo Domingo." (N.Y. *Post*.)

In spite of U.S. ranting about a "minority take-over," it is clear that what developed was an uprising of a large section of the masses against the imperialist power structure—even against the efforts of certain "Communist" and liberal leaders to tie them to Bosch. According to the press, a rebel stronghold has heen the Ciudad Nueva section of the city, "an area of low income housing and student quarters. Planes strafed the arca Wednesday and yesterday." (*Herald Tribune*, 30 April.) On 2 May, "the rebels were winning." Their forces, swollen to thousands "by armed civilians...*cauld not be contralled by their military leaders*." (Same paper) Johnson at once sent in Marines to "save American lives"; but this "humanitarian" pretext, loudly touted by liberal apologists, was rapidly dropped. Instead, as Johnson has admitted, the aim of U.S. intervention was to crush the developing revolution.

Realpolitik Behind Intervention

William Randolph Hearst, Jr., in a *Journal-American* editorial (2 May), favorably quoted Johnson's State of the Union message of 4 January: "We are prepared to live as good neighbors with all, but we cannot be indifferent to acts designed to injure our interests, or our citizens, or our establishments abroad." Barry Goldwater "stressed the effectiveness of 'big stick' diplomacy" and said, "Yes, I approve the landing of the Marines in Santo Domingo for the protection of American lives and property." (*Journal-American*, 30 April.)

Equally guided by Realpolitik are the liberal apologists who regret Johnson's "imprudence" in "going it alone" in unabashed imperialist fashion instead of relying on the Organization of American States (mainly a band of U.S.-backed dictatorships) to do the job under a "democratic" facade. The token contingent which Johnson finally extorted from the OAS to his "international peace force" has been obviously designed to whitewash his butchery behind a drapery of phony "legality" and "consensus." It is now obvious that Johnson has not sent 20,000 troops to suppress a Communist "minority," but to fight thousands of workers and rank-and-file Dominican militants who partly bypassed their "Communist" and liberal leaders and rallied the support of the Dominican masses to a popular revolution against imperialism. Johnson's "concern" about the "foreign training" of agitators was designed to divert attention away from the *direct rape af the Dominican Republic by a foreign accupatian army*. The sensationalism about the "atrocity" of rebels killing cops and Marines was designed to mask the *strafing and bambing of the working-class areas af the city* to smash the revolution. Indeed, imperialism must clearly be *desperate* to commit such a brazen and naked act.

Crisis of Leadership

Castro and other "Communist" leaders have shown their bankruptcy in supporting the capitalist "legality" of Bosch and calling upon the imperialist-dominated United Nations to "intervene." The absence of a truly revolutionary Dominican party to guide the working class and lead the revolution has resulted in confusion among the rebelling masses. The old-line leaders have done their best to abort the revolution and negotiate a "truce" with imperialism. The swearing-in of Boschite military

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1070 **12 June 2015**

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated July 10.**

U.S. Out of the Near East!

Reuters photos

Left: President Obama with Saudi Arabia's newly-crowned King Salman in Riyadh, January 27. Right: Devastated city of Saada in northwest Yemen after Saudi-led air strikes, May 22.

Down With Saudi-led War in Yemen!

With all the subtlety of a *Mad Max* film, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced its declaration of war against the Houthi-led forces now in power in Yemen not from its royal palace but rather from its embassy in Washington. Having already turned Yemen into a firing range for drone attacks, the Obama administration is now reluctantly helping its oil-rich Saudi ally further devastate that small, impoverished country. Over 2000 people have been killed since the war was launched in late March and upwards of one million have been displaced from their homes.

As noted by Conn Hallinan in an article in *CounterPunch* (13 May): "The U.S. has played an important, if somewhat uncomfortable, role in the Yemen War." The U.S. has been supplying the Saudi air force with bombs, in-flight refueling and targeting information. With U.S. and British backing, the Saudis imposed a naval blockade of Yemen, worsening a humanitarian disaster in a country where the populace relies heavily on imported food and where medicine and other necessities are always scarce. In April, U.S. Navy ships, including the aircraft carrier USS *Roosevelt*, were sent to the region to prevent Iranian ships from delivering supplies to Yemen. U.S. president Barack Obama brazenly and hypocritically claimed this naval presence was meant to defend "freedom of navigation"—mass starvation presumably being only a collateral issue.

While supporting its Saudi clients, Washington has been less than enthusiastic about their Yemen adventure. Early on, the lack of a prospect of a quick Saudi victory led the White House to urge negotiations toward a political solution. On June 2, the administration announced that it had engaged in talks with the Houthis aimed at ending the war. The Obama administration is concerned that the anti-Houthi operation is playing into the hands of Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula, as well as threatening yet further destabilization in the region. Voicing the concerns of the White House, the *New York Times* (22 April) intoned, "the challenge has been advising a crucial Middle East ally on how to carry out a complex military campaign whose results were starting to undercut larger political goals." The *Times* article quoted a "Middle East specialist" who complained, "Once your clients have a quasi-independent military capacity, you lose some control over them."

Especially since the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, the American empire has been spreading its tentacles ever more widely and deeply throughout the Near East, wreaking mass murder and destruction, strengthening the most retrograde and anti-woman tribal and religious forces and fueling sectarian conflicts and pogroms. Every time one of its tentacles is weakened or cut off, every time a blow is struck against the American imperialist monster and its local agents and allies, working people and oppressed around the world benefit, not least in the U.S. itself.

That is why we have called for military defense of the Islamic State (ISIS) reactionaries in Iraq and Syria against U.S. imperialism and its foot soldiers on the ground—including Kurdish and Iraqi Shi'ite militias—notwithstanding that the bloodthirsty methods and retrograde outlook of ISIS are counterposed to everything Marxism stands for. And that is why we now likewise take a stand militarily with the Houthi forces and their allies, without giving them any political support, when they are targeted by the U.S.-backed Saudi-led military coalition and its proxies on the ground.

Apologists for the Saudi intervention claim that it was launched in response to a proxy war waged by Shi'ite Iran, which is supposedly funding and arming the Houthis, who adhere to Zaidi Islam, a variant of Shi'ism that in fact has much in common with Sunni Islam. Newly installed Saudi king Salman hopes to awe Tehran by deploying his extensive—and expensive—arsenal of military hardware (usually reserved for air shows) against Houthi fighters and civilians, but there is little evidence linking Iran to the fighting in Yemen. Then again, there was little evidence linking the Saddam Hussein regime to non-existent "weapons of mass destruction," a fact which drives the younger and marginally more articulate brother in the Bush clan, Jeb, to descend into fits of incomprehensible hurbling about bringing democracy and stability to the region. And the current tenant in the White House, who it should be recalled was elected in good part on his pledge to end U.S. involvement in Iraq, is supporting what is arguably the most reactionary regime in the world, Saudi Arabia. That country is a theocracy rooted in the extreme, Wahhabi variant of Sunni fundamentalism, the social strictures of which are quite similar to those of ISIS.

WV Map

Although U.S. reliance on Saudi oil has declined considerably in recent years, Washington wants to retain control over the flow of Gulf oil to the rest of the world. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, along with Zionist Israel, has long been a key ally of the U.S. in the Near East. Its importance particularly increased after the ouster of the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran by the 1979 "Islamic revolution." The Saudi monarchy, one of the biggest importers of advanced U.S. and British weapons systems, plays a critical role in financially sustaining other U.S. client states in the area, such as Egypt and Jordan, as well as propping up other oil-rich Gulf kingdoms and emirates.

After the U.S. overthrow of the Sunni-dominated Ba'athist regime in Baghdad in 2003 and the establishment of a Shi'ite-led regime there, the Sunni theocracy in Saudi Arabia appointed itself guardian of the Sunni Arab peoples of the Near East against the Persian-dominated Shi'ite theocracy in Iran. The Saudi monarchy is also fearful of the sizable oppressed Shi'ite minority in its own kingdom and elsewhere in the peninsula. In 2011, the Saudis viciously suppressed Shi'ite protests against the Saudi's fellow royals in Bahrain. Like that other regional gendarme of pro-imperialist reaction, the Zionist rulers of Israel, the Saudi rulers have openly thumbed their noses at Obama over his nuclear deal with Tehran, much to the applause of the Christian fundamentalists in the Republican Party.

Obama has sought to smooth ruffled feathers, hosting a meeting of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council at Camp David in May, where he promised

continued on page 4

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leader Caamaño as "President" has been due in good part to the efforts of these leaders to channel the masses back into a "popular front" with the ruling class. The agreement of these elements to a "cease fire" even in the face of an imperialist build-up has helped disarm the revolution and facilitated further bloodbaths. The success of the revolution can be guaranteed only by the Dominican workers' conquest of state power, under the leadership of a *revolutionary party*, and the establishment of a Dominican workers' republic. All such advances reciprocally strengthen the socialist revolution in the United States and the world.

WE CALL UPON AMERICAN WORKERS, STUDENTS, AND ALL THOSE FIGHTING OPPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT THIS STRUGGLE OF THEIR BROTHERS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, AND TO RECOGNIZE THE BI-PARTISAN GOVERNMENT OF U.S. IMPERIALISM AS THEIR COMMON ENEMY! ■

Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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Yemen...

(continued from page 3)

to send more military equipment to the emirs and to assist the development of an integrated missile defense system in the region. King Salman showed his continuing displeasure with Obama by boycotting the gathering. But, for the moment, Washington continues to stand foursquare behind its Saudi ally, adding further evidence of why Iran needs nuclear weapons to defend its own sovereignty.

Big Oil and Tribal Turmoil

The Houthi movement, centered on a family of the same name that traces its lineage back to the prophet Muhammed, is a Zaidi revivalist movement that arose in the face of Wahhabi encroachment into the Zaidi heartland of northern Yemen. In the early 2000s, the anti-American sermons of Houthi leader Hussein al-Houthi embarrassed the longtime Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh as he was trying to prove himself a valuable asset of Washington in the "war on terror." In 2004, Saleh unleashed his army in an effort to suppress the Houthis, during which Hussein was killed. Over the next decade, the Houthis waged a low-level insurgency against the central government. Saleh launched five further military campaigns aimed at destroying the Houthis, among them the 2009 "Operation Scorched Earth," carried out with Saudi involvement.

In 2011, inspired by the "Arab Spring," Yemen was swept by protests demanding Saleh's ouster. Washington stood by its dictator until sections of the military threatened to go over to the opposition, at which point the U.S. had Saleh make way "constitutionally" for his vice-president, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Hadi continued his predecessor's policy of hosting a U.S. command center and endorsing the deadly drone attacks that have killed scores of Yemeni civilians (as well as U.S. citizens targeted for assassination like Anwar al-Awlaki) in the name of combating the local Al Qaeda franchise.

Last year, the Houthis launched a new offensive and, joined by their former tormenter Saleh and his supporters, who made up the bulk of the Yemeni army, they quickly overran the Yemeni capital, Sana'a. Hadi fled and ended up in the Saudi capital Riyadh, as had Saleh following his ouster four years earlier. Notably, Washington continued doing business with the new regime in Sana'a. Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Michael Vickers declared, "The Houthis are anti al-Qaeda, and we've been able to continue some of our counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda" (*Al-Monitor*, 22 January). Indeed, as the Houthis continued their surge into the predominantly Sunni southern and eastern parts of the country, Al Qaeda and Sunni tribes now allied with it have been among the main forces opposing them.

The multiple religious, nationalist and tribal forces in the region join together and fall out with each other in a continual state of flux, while the imperialists favor one or another which they then dump when it has served the purpose of the moment. Marxists had no military side in the squalid civil war in Yemen until the U.S.-backed Saudi air war began. Revolutionary socialists must oppose every imperialist military intervention while pointing the way to a revolutionary-proletarian perspective.

Until the first Iraq war in 1990-91, an important source of Yemen's income was remittances from the more than one million Yemeni workers slaving away in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf kingdoms and emirates. But they were all thrown out when Saleh's Yemen became the only Arab state that refused to condemn Saddam Hussein's takeover of Kuwait. (Saleh was mentored by the Iraqi strongman and was known as "Little Saddam.") Even before the current starvation blockade, nearly half of Yemen's children were malnourished; the country ranks 178th in the world in per capita GDP. Until recently, the various tribal leaders and other personages relied on and competed for patronage paid in Saudi petrodollars by the Yemeni government, or directly by the Saudis, as a means of keeping them pacified. This competition for patronage has been behind the recurrent domestic tensions and insurgencies.

While impoverished Yemen lacks much in the way of natural resources, what makes it important for the Gulf monarchies and the imperialists is that it occupies a strategic piece of real estate on the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and shares a border hundreds of miles long with its Saudi neighbor. The House of Saud is paranoid about any hint of instability that might undermine its stranglehold on Saudi society and its grip on one of the largest fortunes in the world. The border is secured to keep out hundreds of thousands of desperate immigrants from Yemen and the Horn of Africa as well as "hostile" terrorists, i.e., those who are not currently sponsored by the Wahhabi establishment. Moreover, Yemen is only 18 miles from the Horn of Africa across the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, located at the southeastern end of the Red Sea. If blocked, this choke point would cut off all shipping between the Suez Canal and points east.

EPA

October 2014: Houthi fighter in Yemen in front of graffiti denouncing murderous U.S. drone strikes.

Saudi Arabia: Bulwark of Reaction

In 1839, well before the discovery of oil, Britain seized the area of southern Yemen around the port city of Aden in order to secure its passage to India, then the British Empire's most profitable colony. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Britain played the sort of cynical game that earned it the epithet, "perfidious Albion." On the one hand, it promised the Arabs independence if they fought against the Turkish-dominated Ottoman Empire, which then controlled much of the Near East and was allied with Germany and Austro-Hungary against Britain and France (and Russia) in the war. On the other, with the infamous Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, Britain schemed with France to seize and share the whole region, drawing arbitrary borders to divide up or lump together distinct ethnic or religious populations that had more or less coexisted under Ottoman rule. Britain also promised that the tiny population of Zionist colonizers in Palestine could create a "Jewish homeland" there—at the expense of the existing Arab population.

Nations and peoples were carved up to exacerbate conflict between Christian and Muslim, Kurd and Arab, Shi'ite and Sunni, Arab and Jew. At the war's end, the British imperialists installed pliant regimes from among the various competing Arab clans. Two brothers of the Hashemite clan became kings of the newly created states of Jordan and Iraq, while the rival Saud family went on to reign in Arabia.

The discovery of large deposits of oil in the late 1930s by what became the Arabian American Oil Company ensured not only that the Saud dynasty would be fabulously wealthy for as long as it retained power but that it would have all the military protection that ascendant U.S. imperialism could provide. Saudi Arabia became a bulwark of reaction in the Near East.

Seeking to counter the rise of "progressive" nationalist forces such as Nasser in Egypt in the 1950s and '60s, Riyadh financed a massive effort to propagate the Wahhabi doctrine, seeding future jihadist groups, and to buy the loyalty of tribal militias in the region. This led, among other things, to a civil war in Yemen.

For centuries, Yemen had been ruled by a line of Zaidi imams who continued to rule in the North after Britain had colonized Aden. One week after the imam Ahmad bin Yahya died in September 1962, nationalist army officers, who looked to Nasser's Egypt, seized power from his son and successor Muhammad al-Badr and declared the Yemen Arab Republic.

An insurgency, supported by Riyadh, was launched to restore the imam. London, fearing that the overthrow of the imamate would bolster opposition to its colonial rule in South Yemen, launched a campaign of covert action, with the support of Washington, to support the royalists. The British imperialists also relished the opportunity to punish Nasser, not least for his seizure of the Suez Canal six years earlier. Egypt responded by sending 20,000 troops to Yemen to bolster the republican regime. The ensuing war involved republican Yemeni officers and Egyptian troops backed by the USSR and China fighting against Saudi-armed tribal militias backed by Britain. As the war ground down the Egyptian forces, the "Arab socialist" Nasser began competing with the Saudis in buying the support of reactionary tribal leaders. The war resulted in the deaths of 200,000 Yemenis and a shattered economy. Although the imamate was not restored, the republican regime that emerged was a conservative one beholden to the tribal leaders and forced to turn to Saudi Arabia after the demoralized Egyptians pulled out.

The declaration of the republic in the North did indeed serve as an inspiration to the masses in South Yemen, including a tiny but politically militant labor movement centered on port and refinery workers. The southern populace rose up against their colonial overlords, who responded with brutal counterinsurgency operations. In the finest Etonian English, a senior British colonial officer intoned: "Pacification of a country unaccustomed to orderly government could not be effected without collective punishment" (quoted in Tariq Ali, "Unhappy Yemen," *London Review of Books*, 25 March 2010).

After four years of guerilla war, the British were evicted from South Yemen in 1967 and the more left-wing elements of the republican forces set up the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) three years later. With aid from the Soviet Union, the new regime provided for universal education and healthcare as well as significant advances for women. Notwithstanding the hosannas of various fake-Marxists at the time for the PDRY, however, there was no social revolution. This economically and socially backward country could hardly sustain elementary democratic reforms. During the 1980s, the regime started unraveling and, with the Soviet Union itself in crisis, in 1990 South Yemen reunited with Saleh's Republic of Yemen.

After the unification, the southern population chafed under Saleh's iron-fisted rule, leading to an all-out rebellion in 1994 that Saleh brutally suppressed. "Arab Afghans," returning from the U.S.-sponsored "holy war" against Soviet troops in Afghanistan, assassinated many left-wing cadre of the former PDRY regime while ruthlessly attacking women's rights. Separatist sentiments in the South persist to this day. Around Aden, a significant force opposing the Houthis is the Southern Movement, an alliance of groups favoring autonomy or independence for the South, which is in a de facto bloc with the imperialist-backed Saudi forces. The question of South Yemen's political status is, for now, subordinated to the defense of the Houthis against the U.S.-backed war.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

What drives the myriad internecine conflicts in the Near East is competition over scarce resources. So long as there is not enough to feed and clothe the masses of the dispossessed—nor any perception that this can be achieved—they will remain mired in the false solace of religion and tribal, ethnic and national solidarities.

The industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, beginning in Britain, led to a qualitative expansion of production, posing the possibility, for the first time in history, that the needs of all could be satisfied. But capitalist property relations (the private ownership of the means of production) and the nation-state became fetters on the further development of the productive forces unleashed by industrial capitalism itself.

The advances in technological and social progress were monopolized by a handful of capitalist ruling classes in Europe, North America and Japan, who enriched themselves at the expense of the workers they exploited. With the rise of imperialism in the decades before WWI, the independent industrial development and modernization of the rest of the world under capitalism were foreclosed. The bourgeoisies of the colonial and semicolonial countries arose as appendages and servants of imperialism and ultimately relied on the imperialists to prevent any challenge by the nascent proletariat to continued capitalist rule.

The development of a proletariat in colonial and semicolonial countries was a consequence of the export of capital that characterizes imperialism. This development was given impetus during WWI, when the disruption of international trade and the diversion of manufacturing in the imperialist centers to production of munitions resulted in the development of local capitalist industry—and a proletariat—in countries like India, China and Egypt.

Today, humanity is being strangled by decaying capitalism, a system based on production for profit, and this is nowhere more evident than in the disease-ridden slums dotted across the semicolonial world, where more than a century of imperialist depredation has served to retard, and indeed reverse, social progress. The only way to overcome the backwardness of the semicolonial world and cast off the yoke of imperialism is the program of permanent revolution. The working class, leading the peasantry and all the oppressed masses, must seize power through socialist revolution—sweeping away all the capitalist regimes of the region: the sheiks, emirs, military strongmen and Zionist rulers.

The proletariat in power would reorganize society on the basis of collectivized property and fight to extend the revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centers. In breaking the chains of exploitation that enslave it, the proletariat will simultaneously open the door to the liberation of all—peasants, women, youth, national and ethnic minorities—who are oppressed under capitalism. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East will there be a full and equal place for all the myriad peoples of the region—Sunnis, Shi'ites and Christians as well as the Kurdish, Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish nations.

For this to come about, the working class

Hastert Hoist on Own Petard

Prosecuted for Withdrawing His Money

Alas poor Dennis. It wasn't supposed to end this way. On May 28, former Republican House speaker Dennis Hastert was indicted on felony charges of violating federal banking laws and lying to the FBI. Throughout 20 years in Congress ending in 2007, Hastert was a pillar of racist reaction, anti-woman and anti-gay bigotry, proponent of imperialist marauding and domestic repression. He was a farm boy made good, a voice of small-town American values—God, family, country and enormous corporate profits—values secured by FBI spying, cop terror and mass incarceration primarily of black people under the "war on drugs." Now, the sorry bastard Hastert is on the receiving end of a sinister prosecution for violating laws he promoted and a vicious smear campaign portraying him as a pedophile sex predator to make sure the charges stick—and destroy what's left of his life.

According to the indictment, Hastert made a series of $50,000 withdrawals from his savings that the banks were required by law to report to the government. After bank inquiries in July 2012, Hastert made withdrawals below the $10,000 reporting threshold, triggering an FBI/IRS investigation for possible "structuring" of currency transactions to evade the reporting requirement. In December 2014, Hastert told FBI agents that he withdrew his money because he didn't trust the U.S. banking system. (Who would?!) Hastert is charged with lying to the Feds who allege that the money was being withdrawn to pay $3.5 million to conceal "past misconduct by defendant against Individual A."

Tempting as it is to revel in Hastert's predicament, we recognize that the use of these legal weapons to railroad such a high-placed, right-wing establishment figure is a bad omen for less well-connected individuals and organizations of the workers movement, as well as black people and Latino immigrants lucky enough to have so much money. We demand that the charges be dropped. At stake is the right to privacy, and with it freedom of association. The banking law under which Hastert is charged, ostensibly targeting organized crime and those labeled terrorists, was adopted in 1970 and reinforced by the 2001 Patriot Act he pushed through Congress. Such laws are used against unions, defenders of the oppressed, opponents of imperialist depredations and anyone the Feds deem a thorn in their side. Deception is the *modus operandi* of the FBI: sting operations, entrapment schemes and confidential informants. But when Hastert purportedly prevaricated on his use of the funds, the state declared it a criminal offense.

While bank reporting regulations are intrusive, the criminalization of withdrawing money is Kafkaesque. As the *New York Times* reported last year, the IRS has seized assets of restaurants and other small businesses that regularly make cash deposits of less than $10,000. Be aware—abiding by the law in this exemplar of bourgeois democracy is no defense. For those it wishes to ensnare, the government can spin any innocuous activity into a crime. From the McCarthyite Red Scare hearings of the 1950s to the baseball steroid hearings of the last decade, those who committed no crime were criminalized for concealing their activities from Congressional witchhunters.

The Feds had no business snooping into Hastert's bank withdrawals. There are thousands of reasons people would not want cops and government officials prying into their finances—from helping young women get abortions to funding political protests. In parts of the country in the 1950s-'60s, disclosure of bank withdrawals to donate money to civil rights organizations would have carried the risk of lynching. Today, people are convicted of "material support to terrorism" simply for donating to certain charities.

Hastert's indictment didn't identify what the "past misconduct" was. However, a day later the Feds leaked allegations of "inappropriate" touching of a male student when Hastert was an Illinois high school wrestling coach decades earlier. Thus a banal charge that would have barely survived a couple of days in the news cycles became the Hastert sex scandal—although he is not actually charged with any sexual misconduct.

We have no idea what occurred between Hastert and "Individual A." But we do know that many lives have been ruined through prosecutions or mere allegations of consensual intergenerational sex—especially between males. We oppose the persecution of anyone who engages in consensual sex, regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation. The guiding principle for sexual relations should be that of effective consent.

Hastert played no small part in promoting the official prudery, anti-gay bigotry and hypocrisy that's biting his ass today. He supported a constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage, anti-abortion "fetal rights" laws and prayer in public schools. But that doesn't disqualify him from defense against charges that are a deadly danger to us all. ***Hands off our bank accounts!*** ■

requires the consciousness and discipline that can only be provided by a Marxist party modeled on the Bolshevik party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky that led the multinational proletariat of Russia to victory in October 1917. The Bolshevik-led seizure of power in backward Russia, the revolutionary government's publication of Sykes-Picot and all the other secret treaties in the tsarist archives, its courageous modernizing efforts in Muslim Central Asia—all these inspired advanced workers and rebellious youth around the globe.

Even following the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union and Stalin's destruction of the Third (Communist) International of Lenin and Trotsky, the Bolshevik Revolution (albeit refracted through the distorting lens of Stalinism) remained a beacon for all those seeking an egalitarian society free of exploitation and oppression. In the 1950s, pro-Moscow Communist parties rooted in the proletariat and comprised of the most oppressed layers of society could have taken power in Iran and Iraq on the basis of social revolutions, but these opportunities were sacrificed on the altar of "peaceful coexistence" and "national unity" with the capitalist rulers. (For more on this, see "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism," *WV* Nos. 740-41, 25 August and 8 September 2000.)

Particularly since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the necessity and possibility of a communist future has been erased from the consciousness of much of the working class. This vision must be reimplanted in the course of renewed struggle around a *class* axis and through the intervention of a conscious revolutionary vanguard. While there is little in the way of an indigenous working class on the Arabian Peninsula (although there are millions of migrant workers), sizable proletarian concentrations exist elsewhere in the Near East with the potential power to topple the capitalist regimes that subjugate hundreds of millions of people—all under the heel of imperialism. From Egyptian textile workers to workers in Israeli chemical plants, Turkish auto factories and Iranian oil fields, the objective basis exists to forge the nuclei of revolutionary proletarian parties as part of a reborn Trotskyist Fourth International. This is the task the International Communist League sets for itself, in the Near East and around the world.

Reuters

May 21: Striking auto workers protesting at Tofas plant in Bursa, center of auto manufacture in Turkey.

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

Whom the gods would destroy they first drive mad. There is certainly plenty of evidence of imperialist madness in Washington's role in the Near East. It is now a commonplace that Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, the most prominent Saudi ever, was a Frankenstein's monster created by the CIA (with the help of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan) in order to kill Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan in the 1980s. As revealed by Seymour Hersh in his exposé in the *London Review of Books* (21 May), Pakistan and Saudi Arabia continued to take care of bin Laden until his murder by a U.S. hit squad four years ago.

In Iraq, the toppling of Saddam Hussein led to a pro-Iran regime and unleashed Sunni and Shi'ite fundamentalist militias that have fought alternately alongside and against the U.S., but have mainly carried out pogroms against each other's peoples. In Syria, the U.S. targeted the Alawite regime of Bashar al-Assad, another ally of Tehran, backing and arming the Sunni fundamentalist rebels who, along with Sunni forces in Iraq, spawned ISIS. Now Washington is backing pro-Iranian Shi'ite militias in Iraq while finding itself in a tacit bloc with Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula against the Houthis!

On top of the irrationality inherent in a system based on the anarchy of the marketplace, imperialist triumphalism over the final overturn of the Bolshevik Revolution made the U.S. rulers drunk with fantasies of their own "democratic" variant of a Thousand Year Reich. Under Democrats and Republicans alike, Washington has been acting as though it can wade in wherever it likes without fear of challenge or concern for the consequences. While sinking ever deeper into the quagmire in the Near East, the U.S. continues to join with Ukrainian fascists and Polish revanchists in baiting the Russian bear and to stage flagrant provocations against the Chinese deformed workers state, such as flying through Chinese air space in the South China Sea (see article on page 1). Add to this the fact that U.S. imperialism's enormous military supremacy is no longer matched by global economic hegemony and you get a dangerous and heady mix indeed.

U.S. imperialism is clearly overextended. The war-weary populace may tolerate the situation so long as it seems wars can be fought from behind video consoles or with proxies and mercenaries, but the situation cannot last. For now, the bourgeoisie faces little social struggle on the home front, thanks in large part to the pro-imperialist labor bureaucracy—who have sold out and derailed one struggle after another until the very existence of the trade unions is in question—and the absence of even a semblance of militant leadership in the black ghettos. But manifold discontents have been building up at the base of this society over the decades—anger over rampant cop terror against black and Latino youth, frustration over the ongoing decline of living standards among the working people, fear of the steady whittling away of union rights and even rights supposedly guaranteed under the Constitution.

It is not the gods who will destroy U.S. imperialism but the men and women who keep the wheels of production turning and whose labor produces the profits of the capitalists. This may seem far-fetched given the current passivity and demoralization of the working class after decades of defeats and betrayals. But there is no other way. It will take a change in the period, marked by a sharp increase in working-class struggle and the intervention of a communist vanguard, for Marxism to again win the allegiance of a layer of the proletariat. But so long as capitalism exists, the class struggle arising from its contradictions will continue to erupt.

Our role is to maintain and propagate the only program that expresses the historic, revolutionary mission of the working class. This means fighting for parties that will bring to the fore the principle of international working-class unity across all national, religious and communal boundaries in opposition to all forms of bourgeois ideology and religious reaction. As part of a reforged Fourth International extending from the advanced industrial countries to the countries of the semicolonial world, Leninist-Trotskyist parties will be dedicated to the struggle for international socialist revolution.

Only then will humanity embark on the road to a communist future. The organization of production for use, not for profit, under the rule of the proletariat, combined with economic planning on an international scale, will usher in a further massive increase in productivity, leading to an elimination of scarcity and the creation of a global communist society, in which divisions based on class, race, national borders, sex and religion will have become artifacts. ■

James P. Cannon on the Legacy of the IWW

To mark the 110th anniversary of the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), we excerpt below James P. Cannon's critical tribute to the revolutionary syndicalist IWW, first published by the Socialist Workers Party in the *Fourth International* (Summer 1955). Cannon recounted a history he knew well, having served his political apprenticeship as a "Wobbly" before becoming a founding member of the American Communist and later Trotskyist movements.

Formed in direct opposition to the craft unionism of the American Federation of Labor, the IWW drew its membership largely from young workers who took to the road to find work where they could—as railroad construction workers, lumberjacks, metal miners and seamen. Taught by harsh experience that the bosses could not be overpowered at the ballot box, those who formed the IWW called for "One Big Union" that would serve as the instrument to seize the means of production from the capitalist class. This reflected healthy disdain for the parliamentary reformism dominating many of the parties of the Second International. But it confused the role of the unions, which must embrace the mass of the workers, with that of a programmatically-based revolutionary party.

The IWW's conception was transcended by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which demonstrated that what the working class needs to overthrow capitalism is a Leninist vanguard party. Following the 1917 Revolution, some of the best elements of the IWW and other left-syndicalist organizations were recruited to the newly founded parties of the Third (Communist) International, although most did not make the leap.

* * *

The Bold Design

When the Founding Convention of the IWW—the Industrial Workers of the World—assembled in Chicago in June, 1905, the general strike movement initiating the first Russian revolution was already under way, and its reverberations were heard in the convention hall. The two events coincided to give the world a preview of its future. The leaders at Chicago hailed the Russian revolution as their own. The two simultaneous actions, arising independently with half a world between them, signalized the opening of a revolutionary century. They were the anticipations of things to come.

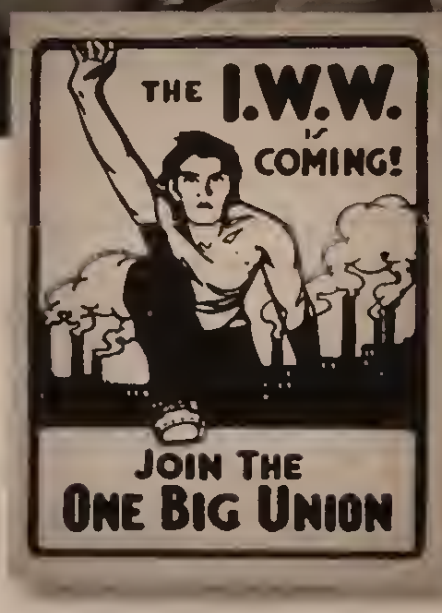
The defeated Russian revolution of 1905 prepared the way for the victorious revolution of 1917. It was the "dress rehearsal," as Lenin said, and that evaluation is now universally recognized. The Founding Convention of the IWW was also a rehearsal; and it may well stand out in the final account as no less important than the Russian action at the same time.

The founders of the IWW were indubitably the original inspirers and prime movers of the modern industrial unions in the mass production industries. That is commonly admitted already, and that's a lot. But even such a recognition of the IWW, as the precursor of the present CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations], falls far short of a full estimate of its historic significance. The CIO movement, at its present stage of development, is only a small down payment on the demands presented to the future by the pioneers who assembled at the 1905 Convention to start the IWW on its way.

The Founding Convention of the IWW brought together on a common platform the three giants among our ancestors—[Eugene] Debs, [Big Bill] Haywood and [Daniel] De Leon. They came from different backgrounds and fields of activity, and they soon parted company again. But the things they said and did, that one time they teamed up to set a new movement on foot, could not be undone. They wrote a

Bain News

IWW demonstration in New York City, 1914. IWW set out to be an industrial union movement uniting all workers, declared in 1905 founding constitution: "It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism."



Charter for the American working class which has already inspired and influenced more than one generation of labor militants. And in its main essentials it will influence other generations yet to come.

They were big men, and they all grew taller when they stood together. They were distinguished from their contemporaries, as from the trade-union leaders of today, by the immensity of their ambition which transcended personal concerns, by their far-reaching vision of a world to be remade by the power of the organized workers, and by their total commitment to that endeavor.

The great majority of the other delegates who answered the call to the Founding Convention of the IWW were people of the same quality. They were the non-conformists, the stiff-necked irreconcilables, at war with capitalist society. Radicals, rebels and revolutionists started the IWW, as they have started every other progressive movement in the history of this country.

In these days when labor leaders try their best to talk like probationary members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, it is refreshing to turn back to the reports of men who spoke a different language. Debs, Haywood and De Leon, and those who stood with them, did not believe in the partnership of capital and labor, as preached by [American Federation of Labor head Samuel] Gompers and Co. at the time. Such talk, they said in the famous "Preamble" to the Constitution of the IWW, "misleads the workers." They spoke out in advance against the idea of the permanent "co-existence" of labor unions and the private ownership of industry, as championed by the CIO leaders of the present time.

The men who founded the IWW were pioneer industrial unionists, and the great industrial unions of today stem directly from them. But they aimed far beyond industrial unionism as a bargaining agency recognizing the private ownership of industry as right and unchangeable. They saw the relations of capital and labor as a state of war.

Brissenden puts their main idea in a nutshell in his factually correct history of the movement: "The idea of the class conflict was really the bottom notion or 'first cause' of the IWW. The industrial union type was adopted because it would make it possible to wage this class war under more favorable conditions." (*The I.W.W.: A Study of American Syndicalism*, by Paul Frederick Brissenden, p. 108.)

The founders of the IWW regarded the organization of industrial unions as a means to an end; and the end they had in view was the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a new social order. This, the heart and soul of their program, still awaits its vindication in the revolution of the American workers. And the revolution, when it arrives, will not neglect to acknowledge its anticipation at the Founding Convention of the IWW. For nothing less than the revolutionary goal of the workers' struggle was openly proclaimed there 50 years ago.

The bold design was drawn by Bill Haywood, General Secretary of the Western Federation of Miners, who presided at the Founding Convention of the IWW. In his opening remarks, calling the convention to order, he said:

"This is the Continental Congress of the working class. We are here to confederate the workers of this country into a working class movement that shall have for its purpose the emancipation of the working class from the slave bondage of capitalism." (*Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World*, p. 1.)

The trade unions today are beginning to catch up with the idea that Negroes are human beings, that they have a right to make a living and belong to a union. The IWW was 50 years ahead of them on this question, as on many others. Many of the old Gompers unions were lily-white job trusts, barring Negroes from membership and the right to employment in their jurisdictions. Haywood, in his opening speech, indignantly denounced the policy of those unions "affiliated with the A. F. of L., which in their constitution and by-laws prohibit the initiation of or conferring the obligation on a colored man." He followed, in his speech at the public ratification meeting, with the declaration that the newly-launched organization "recognizes neither race, creed, color, sex or previous condition of servitude." (*Proceedings*, p. 575.)

And he wound up with the prophetic suggestion that the American workers take the Russian path. He said he hoped to see

Viking

James P. Cannon (center) with Max Eastman (left) and former IWW leader Big Bill Haywood in Moscow at Fourth Congress of Communist International, 1922.

the new movement "grow throughout this country until it takes in a great majority of the working people, and that those working people will rise in revolt against the capitalist system as the working class in Russia are doing today." (*Proceedings*, p. 580.)...

The Duality of the IWW

One of the most important contradictions of the IWW, implanted at its first convention and never resolved, was the dual role it assigned to itself. Not the least of the reasons for the eventual failure of the IWW—as an organization—was its attempt to be both a union of all workers and a propaganda society of selected revolutionists—in essence a revolutionary party. Two different tasks and functions, which, at a certain stage of development, require separate and distinct organizations, were assumed by the IWW alone; and this duality hampered its effectiveness in both fields. All that, and many other things, are clearer now than they were then to the leading militants of the IWW—or anyone else in this country.

The IWW announced itself as an all-inclusive union; and any worker ready for organization on an everyday union basis was invited to join, regardless of his views and opinions on any other question. In a number of instances, in times of organization campaigns and strikes in separate localities, such all-inclusive membership was attained, if only for brief periods. But that did not prevent the IWW agitators from preaching the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in every strike meeting.

The strike meetings of the IWW were in truth "schools for socialism." The immediate issues of the strike were the take-off point for an exposition of the principle of the class struggle, for a full-scale indictment of the capitalist system all up and down the line, and the projection of a new social order of the free and equal.

The professed "non-political" policy of the IWW doesn't stand up very well against its actual record in action. The main burden of its energies was devoted to agitation and propaganda—in soap-box speeches, press, pamphlets and songbooks—against the existing social order; to defense campaigns in behalf of imprisoned workers; and to free-speech fights in numerous localities. All these activities were in the main, and in the proper meaning of the term, political.

The IWW at all times, even during strikes embracing masses of church-going, ordinarily conservative workers, acted as an organization of revolutionists. The "real IWW's," the year-round activists, were nicknamed Wobblies—just when and why nobody knows—and the criterion of the Wobbly was his stand on the principle of the class struggle and its revolutionary goal; and his readiness to commit his whole life to it.

In truth, the IWW in its time of glory was neither a union nor a party in the full meaning of these terms, but something of both, with some parts missing. It was an uncompleted anticipation of a Bolshevik party, lacking its rounded-out theory, and a projection of the revolutionary industrial unions of the future, minus the necessary mass membership. It was the IWW....

The Turning Point

The whole record of the IWW—or at any rate, the best part of it, the positive revolutionary part—was all written in propaganda and action in its first 15 years. That is the enduring story. The rest is anti-climax.

The turning point came with the entrance of the United States into the First World War in the spring of 1917, and the Russian Revolution in the same year. Then "politics," which the IWW had disavowed and cast out, came back and broke down the door.

These two events—again coinciding in Russia and America, as in 1905—demonstrated that "political action" was not merely a matter of the ballot box, subordinate to the direct conflict of the unions and employers on the economic field, but the very essence of the class struggle. In opposing actions of two different classes the "political state," which the IWW had thought to ignore, was revealed as the centralized power of the ruling class; and the holding of the state power showed in each case which class was really ruling.

From one side, this was shown when the Federal Government of the United States intervened directly to break up the concentration points of the IWW by wholesale arrests of its activists. The "political action" of the capitalist state broke the back of the IWW as a union. The IWW was compelled to transform its principal activities into those of a defense organization, striving by legal methods and propaganda, to protect the political and civil rights of its members against the depredations of the capitalist state power.

From the other side, the same determining role of political action was demonstrated positively by the Russian Revolution. The Russian workers took the state power into their own hands and used that power to expropriate the capitalists and suppress all attempts at counter-revolution. That, in fact, was the first stage of the revolution, the pre-condition for all that was to follow. Moreover, the organizing and directing center of the victorious Revolution had turned out to be, not an all-inclusive union, but a party of selected revolutionists united by a program and bound by discipline.

The time had come for the IWW to remember Haywood's prophetic injunction at the Founding Convention in 1905: that the American workers should look to Russia and follow the Russian example. By war and revolution, the most imperative of all authorities, the IWW was put on notice to bring its theoretical conceptions up to date; to think and learn, and change a little.

First indications were that this would be done; the Bolshevik victory was hailed with enthusiasm by the members of the IWW. In their first reaction, it is safe to say, they saw in it the completion and vindication of their own endeavors. But this first impulse was not followed through.

Some of the leading Wobblies, including Haywood himself, tried to learn the lessons of the war and the Russian Revolution and to adjust their thinking to them. But the big majority, after several years of wavering, went the other way. That sealed the doom of the IWW. Its tragic failure to look, listen and learn from the two great events condemned it to defeat and decay.

The governing role of theory here asserted itself supremely, and in short order. While the IWW was settling down in ossification, converting its uncompleted conceptions about the real meaning of political action and political parties into a sterile anti-political dogma, the thinking of others was catching up with reality, with the great new things happening in the world. The others, the young left-wing socialists, soon to call themselves Communists, lacked the battle-tested cadres of the IWW. But they had the correct program. That proved to be decisive.

The newly formed Communist Party soon outstripped the IWW and left it on the sidelines. It was all decided within the space of two or three years. By the time of its fifteenth anniversary in 1920 the IWW had already entered the irreversible road of decline. Its strength was spent. Most of its cadres, the precious human material selected and sifted out in heroic struggle, went down with the organization. They had borne persecution admirably, but the problems raised by it, and by all the great new events, overwhelmed them. The best militants fell into inactivity and then dropped out. The second-raters took over and completed the wreck and the ruin....

Boni and Liveright

Workers at Putilov metal works in Petrograd, Russia, a bastion of soviet power during 1917 October Revolution. Banner at left proclaims: "Long Live the Third International!"

The Heritage

The working class can be really united only when it becomes a class *for itself*, consciously fighting the exploiters as a class. The ruling bureaucrats, who preach and practice class collaboration, constitute in effect a pro-capitalist party in the trade unions. The party of the socialist vanguard represents the consciousness of the class. Its organization signifies not a split of the class movement of the workers, but a division of labor within it, to facilitate and effectuate its unification on a revolutionary basis; that is, as a class for itself.

As an organization of revolutionists, united not simply by the immediate economic interests which bind all workers together in a union, but by doctrine and program, the IWW was in practice, if not in theory, far ahead of other experiments along this line in its time, even though the IWW called itself a union and others called themselves parties.

That was the IWW's greatest contribution to the American labor movement—in the present stage of its development and in those to come. Its unfading claim to grateful remembrance will rest in the last analysis on the pioneering role it played as the first great anticipation of the revolutionary party which the vanguard of the American workers will fashion to organize and lead their emancipating revolution.

This conception of an organization of revolutionists has to be completed and rounded out, and recognized as the most essential, the most powerful of all designs in the epoch of imperialist decline and decay, which can be brought to an end only by a victorious workers' revolution. The American revolution, more than any other, will require a separate, special organization of the revolutionary vanguard. And it must call itself by its right name, a party.

The experimental efforts of the IWW along this line remain part of the permanent capital of those who are undertaking to build such a party. They will not discard or discount the value of their inheritance from the old IWW; but they will also supplement it by the experience and thought of others beyond our borders.

The coming generation, which will have the task of bringing the class struggle to its conclusion—fulfilling the "historic mission of the working class," as the "Preamble" described it—will take much from the old leaders of the IWW—Debs, Haywood, De Leon and [Vincent] St. John, and will glorify their names. But in assimilating all the huge experiences since their time, they will borrow even more heavily from the men who generalized these experiences into a guiding theory. The Americans will go to school to the Russians, as the Russians went to school to the Germans, Marx and Engels.

Haywood's advice at the Founding Convention of the IWW still holds good. The Russian way is the way to our American future, to the future of the whole world. The greatest thinkers of the international movement since Marx and Engels, and also the greatest men of action, were the Russian Bolsheviks. The Russian Revolution is there to prove it, ruling out all argument. That revolution still stands as the example; all the perversions and betrayals of Stalinism cannot change that.

The Russian Bolsheviks—Lenin and Trotsky in the first place—have inspired every forward step taken by the revolutionary vanguard in this country since 1917. And it is to them that the American workers will turn for guidance in the next stages of their evolving struggle for emancipation. The fusion of their "Russian" ideas with the inheritance of the IWW is the American workers' prescription for victory. ■

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AFP

AP

Left: Workers in Tiananmen Square during incipient proletarian political revolution against Stalinist regime led by Deng Xiaoping, May 1989. Placard reads: "Workers strike/Students strike/Xiaoping, step down!" Right: "Goddess of Democracy" statue erected during protests. Bourgeois media seized on petty-bourgeois "pro-democracy" forces to falsely portray uprising as pro-capitalist.

On China's 1989 Tiananmen Upheaval

We print below a contribution by Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on our understanding of the May-June 1989 mass protests in China centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square. It was written in response to a longtime reader of the International Communist League press who, in a letter to a comrade, commented on our article "Hong Kong Protests: Spearhead for Capitalist Counterrevolution" (*WV* No. 1054, 17 October 2014).

Offering several useful observations about political developments in Hong Kong, the reader criticized the article's assessment of the Tiananmen upheaval, which brought the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime of Deng Xiaoping to the point of collapse. Writing that "there has been an overestimation of the break between the main body of the working class (crucially the section in state-owned companies) and the CCP in 1989," he also challenged our depiction of the role workers' defense groups played in the protests and the extent of the repression subsequently meted out against workers.

The imperialists and the bourgeois media falsely portray the events in the spring of 1989 as a movement for capitalist counterrevolution under the banner of Western-style "democracy." The social explosion was triggered by protests initiated by students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, which increasingly drew in groups of workers and spread throughout the country. Far from seeking a return to capitalism, Chinese workers overwhelmingly directed their anger at the sharply rising economic inequalities, rampant corruption and inflation encouraged by Deng's program of "building socialism with capitalist methods."

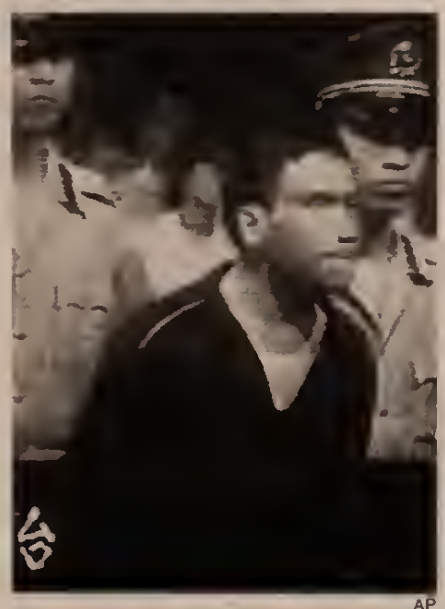
The events of May-June 1989 decisively demonstrated that the Stalinist bureaucracy was not a new type of possessing class but rather a brittle and contradictory caste parasitically resting atop the collectivized economy. While a capitalist ruling class faced with a proletarian challenge to its rule inevitably unites around a program of counterrevolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy, including the military officer corps, began to fracture under the impact of the proletarian upsurge.

The CCP bureaucracy, whose rule undermines the workers state and socialized economy established through the 1949 Revolution, must be swept away through proletarian political revolution that establishes a regime based on workers democracy and committed to international socialist revolution as against the Stalinist bureaucracy's reactionary, nationalist utopia of building "socialism in one country." As opposed to bourgeois parliamentarism, such a regime would be based on elected workers and peasants councils (soviets). Proletarian political revolution would be premised on defense of the collectivized economy and would suppress counterrevolutionary elements.

The mass upsurge in 1989 was an incipient proletarian political revolution; what was centrally lacking was a Leninist-Trotskyist party to bring genuine communist consciousness to the working class. Such a revolutionary party would necessarily be internationalist, linking defense of the Chinese workers state to the fight for proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers to establish an internationally planned economy and lay the basis for the construction of a socialist world of material abundance. The International Communist League fights to build a revolutionary international party, a reforged Fourth International, the necessary instrument to lead the working class to power internationally.

* * *

Our reader raises a number of criticisms of the section of the article in *WV* No. 1054 that discusses the crisis in China in the spring of 1989. In considering and responding to these criticisms, I'll begin by restating the assessment we made at the time.



AP

June 1989: Shanghai worker condemned to death for protesting killing of demonstrators.

We described the student-based protests *as such* as having "something of the character of political theater (including a statue of 'the goddess of democracy') and pressure politics" (*WV* No. 479, 9 June 1989). However, these protests evoked widespread sympathy and support among the mass of working people. Thus, the initial attempt by the CCP regime to use the army to suppress the protests in mid May was confronted by spontaneous mass resistance as military convoys sought to traverse Beijing. Tens of thousands of people poured into the streets, obstructing the troop movements while imploring soldiers and officers not to use force against the student protesters. The regime then temporized, enabling the protests to continue for another two and a half weeks.

The use of the military to disperse the Tiananmen protests in early June triggered mass, militant protests—heavily involving working-class and plebeian youth—elsewhere in Beijing and also other major cities. We wrote at the time:

> "While pro-regime military forces still occupy the center of Beijing, the rest of the city is in the hands of insurgent workers and students: 'everywhere in Beijing people reacted to the killings by torching vehicles and creating blockades. The troops only controlled a few major thoroughfares, and elsewhere citizens continued to control the streets' (*New York Times*, 5 June). In the great industrial metropolis of Shanghai, student activists and militant workers have set up barricades using buses, trucks and cars. And a de facto general strike has brought economic activity to a standstill. In the central industrial city of Wuhan workers and students occupy a strategic bridge over the Yangtze River, a crucial transport link between northern and southern China."
>
> —"Beijing Massacre—Civil War Looms," *WV* No. 479, 9 June 1989

We characterized these protest actions as an incipient proletarian political revolution.

Our understanding of events in China in the spring of 1989 was summarily stated in the document adopted by the Second International Conference of the ICL in the fall of 1992:

> "The rampant official corruption and emergence of nouveau riche petty capitalists along with rising inflation and unemployment fueled a growing popular discontent which came to the surface in the 1989 crisis. While the student-based 'democracy' movement had illusions in Western-style parliamentarism, the working masses who took to the streets wanted a return to economic equality and security, a restoration of the 'iron rice bowl.' "The Deng regime moved to suppress the mass protests by ordering loyal army units to carry out a massacre. Contrary to Western imperialist propaganda, the main victims of this bloodbath were not the student activists, most of whom withdrew from Tiananmen Square unscathed, but rather young workers in Beijing and other cities. In the days following the Beijing massacre—when the attitude of the army as a whole was still in question—China was poised on the brink of a proletarian political revolution."
>
> —"For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!" *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93

During the following two decades we have not significantly revised much less reversed the above-quoted assessment in light of additional empirical research and argumentation.

Our reader presents a significantly different assessment. To validate that assessment, he strongly recommends a book by Zhao Dingxin, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement* (University of Chicago Press, 2001). (The publishers used the English format, putting Zhao's surname last.)

Zhao was a young Chinese intellectual in the spring of 1989 doing graduate work in entomology at a Canadian university. After visiting China in April for academic and personal reasons, he returned in May to Canada, where he followed the mounting protests and political crisis from afar. The suppression of the Tiananmen protests caused him to change his main intellectual concern from science to social theory. Eventually he became a professor in the sociology department of the University of Chicago. In 1993 and 1997, Zhao visited China, where he conducted interviews with many young intellectuals who as student activists had participated in the '89 Tiananmen protests. These interviews (in addition to documentary material at the time) are the main source for the empirical analysis presented in *The Power of Tiananmen*.

In its basic political outlook, the book is an expression of the "death of communism" ideology prevalent among Western bourgeois intellectuals in the post-Soviet period. In the concluding section, Zhao contended that the only alternative to military repression would have been for the CCP leadership to surrender political power in the course of a "transition to democracy" such as occurred, he maintained, in the former Soviet bloc in 1989-92:

> "Once such a large-scale social movement gains momentum, a state such as the current China actually has few means of conflict resolution. Often, the state is left with only two choices: sur-

render or repression. As events in the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries have clearly shown, when confronted with this alternative, a generation with no revolutionary experience may not defend a regime by way of bloody military repression. Even if some leaders were to decide on repression, the more professionally trained soldiers may no longer follow their orders. A sudden surrender, instead of gradual change, made the transition to democracy in the former Soviet Union very painful."

To avoid replicating the convulsive experience of the former Soviet bloc, Zhao advocated the gradual "democratization" of China undertaken from above:

> "Therefore, the current Chinese leaders should place political reform at the top of their agenda. This is not to suggest that China should copy any particular Western political system. However, such a political reform has to aim at changing the foundation of state power from ideology and performance legitimation to legal-electoral legitimation. It should minimally include formally abandoning Marxism as a state ideology, renaming the Communist Party as a socialist party, establishing an independent legal system, and gradually instituting competitive elections with candidates competing only for the office rather than for mutually incompatible ideologies."

Obviously, our reader does not share Zhao's program for a "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution in China. But it is not clear whether he agrees with Zhao that had the CCP regime collapsed in the spring of 1989, it would necessarily have been replaced by a Chinese version of Poland's Lech Walesa or Russia's Boris Yeltsin. More likely, he agrees with Zhao's analysis in the narrower empirical sense of recounting what actually happened.

Workers, Students and the Effects of "Market Reforms"

Before discussing Zhao's empirical research and analysis, I want to compare his views with those of Wang Hui, who emerged in the 1990s as the best-known left-critical intellectual in China's academic milieu. Wang identified with the main current of the Western far left that found an ephemeral organizational expression in the "anti-globalization" protest movement of the early 2000s. As it happened, he was teaching at the University of Washington when the first major "anti-globalization" protest took place in Seattle in late 1999. Perhaps influenced by that event, Wang wrote a lengthy essay retrospectively analyzing what he termed the "1989 social movement" in China. Unlike Zhao Dingxin, Wang Hui personally participated in the Tiananmen protests. According to his own testimony, he was in one of the last student groups to leave the Square in the early morning of June 4.

Looking back, he saw a ***fundamental difference*** in the attitude and aspirations of the student protesters and the mass of working people who sympathized with and supported the protests. Most young Chinese intellectuals welcomed the post-Mao market-oriented economic "reforms," which they associated with greater personal freedom, and favored their expansion. The mass of working people were reacting against the ***negative*** effects of the "reforms"—rising inflation, unemployment among youth first entering the labor market, the loss of job security for workers in state-owned enterprises as well as in the growing private sector, pervasive nepotism and corruption among the CCP officialdom.

With regard to these differences, Wang wrote:

> "Taken as a group, however, the intellectuals not only lacked the capacity to provide practical social goals, but they also never understood the full extent of the social mobilization that had taken place. This was partly because, as an intellectual movement critical of the practices of state socialism, the social thought of the 1980s could neither perceive nor comprehend the social contradictions peculiar to the times. Neither could it understand the socialist tendencies inhering within the grassroots social movement nor transcend the intellectual blinders imposed by Cold War ideology. It is necessary to distinguish between two conceptions of socialism: one is the 'socialism' of the old state ideology, characterized by a system of state monopoly; the other is the movement for social security that developed out of that system of state monopoly and the expansion of the market system, characterized by its opposition to monopoly and its demands for social democracy."
>
> —"The 1989 Social Movement and the Historical Roots of China's Neoliberalism" in *China's New Order: Society, Politics, and Economy in Transition* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

Here I want to comment (parenthetically, so to speak) on Wang's misuse of the term "neoliberalism" with regard to China. It is, or at any rate was, common for Western leftists to identify the market-oriented economic policies undertaken by Deng and his successors with the ideology and program of neoliberalism. Mainstream Western bourgeois intellectuals also contend that capitalism in some form has been restored in post-Mao China. Nonetheless, the latter recognize that China's economic system is ***fundamentally different*** than capitalism, not to speak of neoliberalism. The favored term used by Western academics and financial journalists to describe China's economic system is "state capitalism." For example, this term is used throughout with respect to China by Martin Wolf, chief economics commentator at the London *Financial Times*, in a recent book on the post-2008 global economy, *The Shifts and the Shocks: What We've Learned—and Have Still to Learn—from the Financial Crisis* (Penguin Press, 2014). Moreover, Wolf, a highly regarded and influential bourgeois intellectual, judges China's Keynesian-type economic policies *favorably* compared to the policies pursued by the leaders of the capitalist world:

> "The great recession that followed the worst of the financial crisis, in late 2008 and early 2009, hit many emerging and developing countries hard. Those who were least hit—China, above all—had to make bold policy decisions to offset the impact of the shock upon their economies. Those decisions also created troubling longer-term challenges.
>
> "The result, none the less, was an acceleration of the already rapid shift in the balance of the world economy from the high-income countries to the emerging countries, particularly China."

For sophisticated bourgeois intellectuals like Martin Wolf, China's supposed "state capitalism" lies at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum from neoliberalism.

Liberal Political Bias

As previously noted, Zhao's empirical analysis draws heavily from interviews he conducted in China in 1993 and 1997. Almost all of these interviews were with young intellectuals who as students had participated in the Tiananmen protests. Very few of the interviews were with non-students who had taken part in the actions that prevented military units from converging on Tiananmen when martial law was first proclaimed on May 20. And there were no interviews with those (e.g., young workers and unemployed plebeian youth) who engaged in militant protests in the immediate aftermath of the military's clearing of Tiananmen. Zhao's narrative account as well as the calendar of events listed in the beginning of *The Power of Tiananmen* ends on June 4.

Reuters

Shanghai, December 2011: Striking workers block entrance gate of Hi-P International electronics factory.

The unbalanced selection of the interviewees presents a picture of China in the spring of 1989 in which liberal-minded students and their ideology of "pure democracy" were the only possible opposition to the continued "authoritarian" rule of the CCP. What Wang Hui termed the "socialist tendencies" among the working masses is written out of this book.

The biased nature of Zhao's empirical research is evident with respect to the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union (also known as the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation). His analysis of this group is partly based on interviews with leading student activists involved in it. Evidently, no worker members of the group were interviewed by him. At any rate, none were quoted in the relevant section of his book.

Arguably, the most important event that occurred in Beijing in the spring of 1989 did *not* take place in Tiananmen Square. Rather it took place in working-class and other lower-class neighborhoods whose residents effectively blocked the military units converging on Tiananmen. The investigation of this pivotal event in Zhao's book is meager compared to the exhaustive chronicling of the student-based protests and the various competing factions therein. When martial law was declared, numerous protesters vacated Tiananmen and some leading student activists went into hiding or were preparing to do so. Only when the troops were turned back in the outlying neighborhoods did the students who had left return to Tiananmen. The occupation continued, mainly with the influx of students from other cities.

In order to avoid a repetition of what happened during the first attempt at a military crackdown, in early June a large number of soldiers were infiltrated through Beijing wearing civilian clothes and not carrying arms. They were then provided with arms as they approached Tiananmen. That the CCP/People's Liberation Army leadership had recourse to this unusual tactic indicated that they recognized the extent of popular support for the student-based protests.

Zhao's empirical analysis does substantiate one of our reader's criticisms to a certain extent. This concerns the nature of organized working-class presence in the Tiananmen protests. The Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union was formed on May 18 at the initiative of certain leading student activists. The group attracted very few workers. The main documents put out in the name of the Union were written by young intellectuals who were active in the various student organizations. The protest actions in which worker members of the group participated were under the direction of leaders of the student organizations. Zhao concludes, I believe correctly, that "if we examine the role of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union through such criteria as leadership, sources of material resources, and major activities and participants, it becomes obvious that the union was basically only an appendage of the student movement." But it does *not* follow that even the small number of workers who joined this group shared the political views of the young intellectuals who organized them and directed their activities.

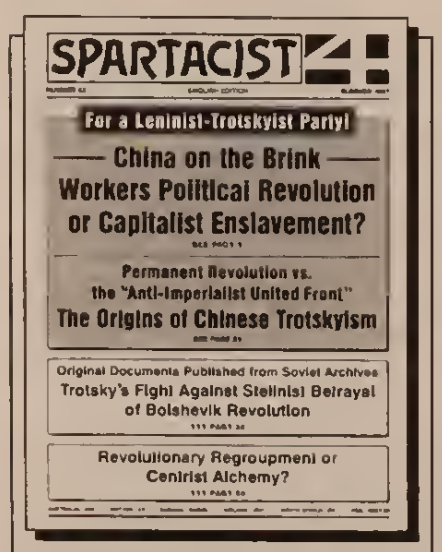
At this historical juncture it wasn't possible for members of the working class to intervene in the Tiananmen protests in a way that was politically and organizationally independent of the main body of student activists. The various student organizations formed in the course of the protests had been incubated, so to speak, in the broad regime-critical milieu that emerged in Beijing's universities in the mid-late 1980s. A number of leading student activists had been involved in discussion circles grouped around professors who expounded somewhat critical views of the CCP regime and its history. Compared to university students, workers in Beijing's factories were atomized and had no institutional framework for discussing and developing shared political views, not to speak of independent organizations.

But that does not mean that the inchoate political attitudes of most Chinese workers corresponded to those of liberal-minded young intellectuals. Nor does it mean that they supported the CCP regime, as our reader contends:

> "In short, the students and those who backed them tried to produce a Solidarnosc-type 'independent workers' movement' as an appendage of the 'democracy movement'. They failed because the main body of the working class did not heed their message, and were largely loyal to the CCP."

I think he does not understand the specific historical conditions that underlay the mobilization of the mass of workers in Poland on a counterrevolutionary basis in 1980-81. The organizational basis for Solidarność was provided by the Roman Catholic church, which had functioned as a quasi-official opposition to the Warsaw Communist regime since 1956. The coterie of social-democratic intellectuals (e.g., Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik) involved in the formation of Solidarność acted as political front men for the Catholic hierarchy headed by the Polish pope Wojtyla. The political authority of the Catholic church was closely linked to the popular strength of anti-Russian (i.e., anti-Soviet) Polish nationalism. Neither of these factors was or is relevant to the potential for a mobilization of workers in China on a counterrevolutionary basis.

The extent of illusions in bourgeois forms of "democracy"—a government supposedly based on freely contested elections with universal and equal suffrage—is another question, one that we will certainly encounter and have to confront when the political situation in China opens up. ■



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Defend China...

(continued from page 1)

Vise on China," *WV* No. 1005, 6 July 2012). This neutral position disregarded the islands' military importance, undercutting our principled defense of China, and underplayed the growing rapprochement between Vietnam and the U.S.

The Spratly Islands form part of a strategic military perimeter called the "first island chain," which runs from the Southeast Asian coast through the Spratlys and Philippines to Japan. Numerous military sources make clear that, in the event of a war with China, the U.S. plans to establish a naval blockade along this perimeter, closing off shipping lanes and blocking Chinese access to the Pacific Ocean. China aims to develop sufficient forces to maintain its own barrier along these same islands to keep shipping lanes open and prevent hostile forces from approaching its coast.

A particular danger recognized by China is the potential chokepoint for petroleum imports at the Strait of Malacca, a narrow channel between Indonesia and Malaysia where the South China Sea connects with the Indian Ocean. Chinese development of gas and oil resources in the South China Sea has the potential to go some way toward alleviating this concern. China is also developing "new silk road" overland trade routes and pipelines.

The Pentagon officials who are banging the drums for military maneuvers against China are also promoting the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade pact with countries on the Pacific Rim including Vietnam. The TPP is designed to counteract Beijing's growing economic clout and to secure markets for U.S. industry through the further subjugation of dependent and economically backward countries. The Obama administration is seeking to fast-track the TPP through Congress. The pro-capitalist AFL-CIO trade-union bureaucracy opposes the pact on the protectionist basis that it does not go far enough "to create the strategic advantage over China" and that it will cost American jobs by moving work to Vietnam ("The U.S.-China Economic Relationship: The TPP Is Not the Answer," aflcio.org, undated). While bashing China, this chauvinism binds American workers to their class enemy, the U.S. capitalist exploiters, against the working people of other countries.

U.S. Navy surveillance photo of Chinese construction on man-made islands in the South China Sea, May 20.

U.S. Navy

Vietnam: Don't Be a Cat's Paw for U.S. Imperialism!

Forty years ago, the U.S. imperialists were humiliated on the battlefield in Vietnam. The Vietnamese workers and peasants carried out a social revolution that expropriated the capitalists and landlords and drove U.S. forces and their Vietnamese puppet regime out of Saigon in April 1975. The cost was high: almost three million Vietnamese were killed and many more maimed. Even today, 20 percent of the country is uninhabitable as a result of unexploded U.S. ordnance. The U.S.-imposed starvation embargo was lifted only in the late 1990s.

The victory of the Vietnamese Revolution was achieved despite the treacherous policies of the Stalinist bureaucracies in both the USSR and China, who repeatedly prevailed upon their Vietnamese counterparts to give back at the bargaining table what had been won militarily. Vietnamese nationalist hostility to China has been massively reinforced by such betrayals: in 1972, as U.S. bombs were raining down on revolutionary Vietnam, Mao sealed his own criminal alliance with the U.S. against the Soviet Union. In 1979, China had Washington's encouragement when it invaded Vietnam—only to suffer a well-deserved, stinging defeat.

But in recent years, Vietnam has made its own pact with the devil. As part of growing ties between the two countries, U.S. warships have regularly visited Vietnamese ports. One factor driving this thaw is Vietnam's appeals to the U.S. in its territorial conflicts with China. On June 1, Vietnamese defense minister Phung Quang Thanh and Ashton Carter jointly announced an expanded military agreement that allows for common combat operations. Carter promised $18 million in U.S. aid for vessels for Vietnam's Coast Guard, which has a history of confrontation with Chinese forces in the South China Sea.

The fact is that the ruling bureaucracies in the Chinese and Vietnamese deformed workers states are cut from the same cloth. Their treacherous alliances with the U.S. imperialist mass murderers follow from their anti-Marxist perspective of building socialism in (only) one country. First put forward by Stalin in 1924 as an expression of the outlook of the consolidating conservative bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, this dogma represented the repudiation of the revolutionary, internationalist program that animated the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution—a program that was upheld by the Left Opposition under Leon Trotsky's leadership and subsequently by the Trotskyist Fourth International. Stalinism meant seeking to placate the imperialist powers by showing the bureaucracy's determination to head off any threat of workers revolution in the capitalist countries.

Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92—a historic defeat prepared by decades of imperialist economic and military pressure as well as Stalinist misrule—removed what had been the most substantial counterweight to the U.S. in its aim of world domination and emboldened the U.S. imperialists to run roughshod over working people and the oppressed around the world. The CCP regime's support to the anti-Soviet crusade helped create a world where China is now front and center, a strategic target of the U.S. bourgeoisie. If the forces of capitalist counterrevolution succeed in China, this would be an unmitigated disaster for the workers and peasants of China and a grave defeat for working people worldwide. It would pose an immediate threat to the survival of the Vietnamese workers state.

The task faced by the Chinese and Vietnamese working classes is the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies through proletarian political revolutions, establishing regimes based on workers democracy and the perspective of international extension of the revolutions. If revolutionary workers and peasants governments were in power in Beijing and Hanoi, their territorial conflicts would be easily resolved, with both countries sharing technology and resources and cooperating in mutual defense against imperialism.

U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Workers and the Oppressed

In 2010, the Obama administration announced that a "pivot toward Asia" would be a top priority. This "military rebalancing" has been constrained by the U.S.'s continued involvement in the slaughter in Afghanistan and in the Near East. Nonetheless, as the recent American aggression in the South China Sea makes clear, Washington's strategic goal remains to destroy those countries where the capitalist system of exploitation has been overthrown. As part of the struggle to mobilize the U.S. working class against its capitalist rulers, we demand: *All U.S. troops and bases out of Asia!*

The "pivot toward Asia" has included a growing U.S. military presence in the Philippines. Seized in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the Philippines was one of the first colonies of the rising U.S. imperialist power. U.S. forces brutally suppressed anticolonial uprisings in the colony, slaughtering up to half a million Filipinos between 1899 and 1902. After gaining formal independence following World War II, the Philippines remained a semicolonial U.S. vassal, serving as a linchpin of its anti-Communist machinations in the region. The U.S. is pushing for an "enhanced defense cooperation" agreement that would allow even more U.S. troops, planes and ships to flood into Filipino military bases.

Workers from the U.S. to Japan to the Philippines must be won to the defense of the deformed workers states as part of the struggle to overthrow their own capitalist ruling classes. To smash the U.S. imperialist war machine will require an American workers revolution. The Spartacist League/U.S. is dedicated to building the party that can lead such a struggle as the American section of a reforged Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. The victory of proletarian revolutions on a world scale will eliminate forever the drive for war inherent in the global capitalist system and, by eliminating the exploitation of man by man, lay the basis for unimagined material abundance to fulfill human needs. ■

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Death Penalty...

(continued from page 12)

and sharpen the executioner's ax. Ultimately, such measures are directed against the ability of working people and the oppressed to struggle in their own interests against their exploiters.

From the Lynch Rope to Lethal Injection

Expressing a widespread hut fatuous sentiment, *Time* magazine declared on its June 8 cover: "The Last Execution: Why the era of capital punishment is ending." The numher of executions is down considerably, especially compared to the late 1990s. But for much of the bourgeoisie the main concern is not the justice system's proclivity to frame up and kill innocent people nor the unspeakable torture inflicted hy the drug cocktails. Rather, it cites dollars and cents, especially in states with cash-strapped budgets. When Nebraska's Republican legislature overturned the death penalty in late May, one Republican state senator explained: "The taxpayers have not gotten the bang for their buck on this death penalty for almost 20 years."

On occasion, the American rulers engage in a charade over how to more "humanely" put people to death. In recent years, manufacturers in Europe and the U.S. have, for their own reasons, stopped providing the sedative used in the execution cocktail. States have scrambled to find substitutes, like the one that had Charles Warner writhing in agony while strapped to the gurney in Oklahoma earlier this year, crying out: "My body is on fire!" Now the Supreme Court is considering the case of three other condemned prisoners from that state attempting to block the use of the same drug. In the face of the drug shortage, politicians in some states are now debating gruesome alternatives to lethal injection: firing squads, electric chairs, the gas chamber.

AP

Owensboro, Kentucky, 1936: Crowd of some 20,000 at public execution by hanging of Rainey Bethea, a black man.

In the states of the former Confederacy, the death penalty is not about to go away. Indeed, while nearly every other advanced industrialized country has abolished capital punishment (with the notable exception of Japan), its persistence in the U.S. is rooted in the legacy of black chattel slavery. Slaves were killed with impunity for "crimes" ranging from insolence toward whites to rebellion against the slave masters. It took a bloody Civil War to smash slavery. But the promise of black freedom was betrayed when the Northern capitalists ended the period of Radical Reconstruction by withdrawing federal troops from the South, leaving black people impoverished and largely defenseless. With the Ku Klux Klan as the spearhead, the white propertied classes subjected blacks to legally enforced racial segregation, stripped them of all democratic rights and held them down through terror, especially lynching. The hlack population was consolidated anew as a specially oppressed race-color caste.

Capital punishment in America is a direct descendent of and replacement for the lynch rope. In the 1890s, blacks were lynched at a rate of one every other day; four decades later, the state was carrying out executions at the rate of one every other day. A 2015 study by the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative titled "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror" documents nearly 4,000 lynchings in the South, noting: "By 1915, court-ordered executions outpaced lynchings in the former slave states for the first time." In the period between 1910 and 1950, black people made up 75 percent of those executed in the South.

Bettmann

New York City protest meeting to save condemned anarchist workers Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were executed in 1927.

The racist application of the death penalty was sanctified by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1987 case of Warren McCleskey, a black prisoner executed in Georgia in 1991. McCleskey's attorneys presented an authoritative study detailing that black people in Georgia convicted of killing whites were sentenced to death *22 times* more frequently than those convicted of killing blacks. In rejecting McCleskey's appeal, the Supreme Court explicitly acknowledged that to accept this premise would throw "into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system." In its callous pronouncement, the court expressed a basic truth: McCleskey was a victim of the racism that pervades the criminal justice system. As guardians of the American bourgeois order, the capitalist state is also committed to enforcing the oppression of black people that is its bedrock. ***For black liberation through socialist revolution! Finish the Civil War!***

We welcome the recent repeal of the death penalty in Nebraska and any other measure that would curtail capital punishment. But even if the death penalty were eliminated, it would not fundamentally change the violently racist and oppressive nature of capitalist class rule. The slowdown on death row has not slowed the executioners in blue uniforms from gunning down black people and Latinos in the streets.

Moreover, under capitalism all reforms are reversihle. In 1972, at a time marked by the tumultuous social struggles of the civil rights and Vietnam antiwar movements, the Supreme Court declared the death penalty as practiced unconstitutional, ordering states to rewrite their laws. A mere four years later, the Court gave the green light for the killing machines to resume their grisly work. The next year, Gary Gilmore was executed by firing squad in Utah.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) has posted an April 29 article by the national director of their Campaign to End the Death Penalty that recycles the liberal prognosis that "the death penalty, it seems, is dying" and summons activists to "continue to chip away at the death penalty system" (socialistworker.org), without a word of criticism of the Democrats. Here is yet another expression of the reformist illusion that the cruelties and "excesses" of the capitalist state can be chipped away, leaving behind institutions that act humanely and justly from the standpoint of workers and black people. In contrast, we Marxists aim to imbue those protesting the depredations of U.S. capitalism with the understanding that putting a final halt to the rulers' machinery of death—the killer cops, the swollen prisons, the imperialist military—requires sweeping away the whole capitalist system through proletarian socialist revolution.

Marxism on Crime and Punishment

Death sentences, the "living death" of life without parole, and the whole concept of punishment under capitalism are relics of ancient religious codes of retributive justice. As we wrote when the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976: "The Marxist attitude toward crime and punishment is that we are against it.... Socialists do not proceed from the standpoint of punishing the offender. Such a vindictive penal attitude is fundamentally a religious rather than a materialist conception of social relations" (*WV* No. 117, 9 July 1976). Of course, a humane and rational society, which capitalism decidedly is not, may find a need to separate out certain dangerous individuals—for the protection of others as well as the offenders themselves. But this would he done without stigma or deprivation and with education, medical care, rehahilitation and the goal of reintegration as productive members of society.

When the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky led the workers to power in the Octoher 1917 Revolution, they carried out this program and banned the death penalty in Russia. The determination not to hase the penal code of a workers state on retribution found its fullest expression in the 1919 party program, which advocated "a fundamental alteration in the character of punishment, introducing conditional sentences on an extensive scale, applying public censure as a means of punishment, replacing imprisonment by compulsory labour with retention of freedom, and prisons hy institutions for training, and establishing the principle of comradely courts."

At the same time, the Bolsheviks did not flinch from the necessary and extraordinary measures of Red Terror required by the 1918-20 Civil War against iinperialist-backed counterrevolutionary forces. But the penal code was a more permanent feature of the proletarian state, embodying the Bolsheviks' expectations that the securing of Soviet power and the extension of the revolution internationally would open the path to the gradual withering away ol the state. It was only after the parasitic bureaucracy around J.V. Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat that the old "tortures and torments" denounced by the early Soviet government, including the death penalty, were resurrected as permanent features. Despite this bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet Union remained a workers state based on collectivized property forms. The Trotskyists continued to defend the Soviet Union unconditionally against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucrats.

Our perspective is that of Lenin and Trotsky—for socialist revolutions to overturn capitalism worldwide and the repressive state machinery that defends it. There can be no fair or "humane" system of justice for the working class and oppressed in a society based on exploitation. With its central position in production, the working class has both the social power and the material interest to shatter the capitalist order. To bring that consciousness to the proletariat requires forging a revolutionary workers party of the Bolshevik type. ■

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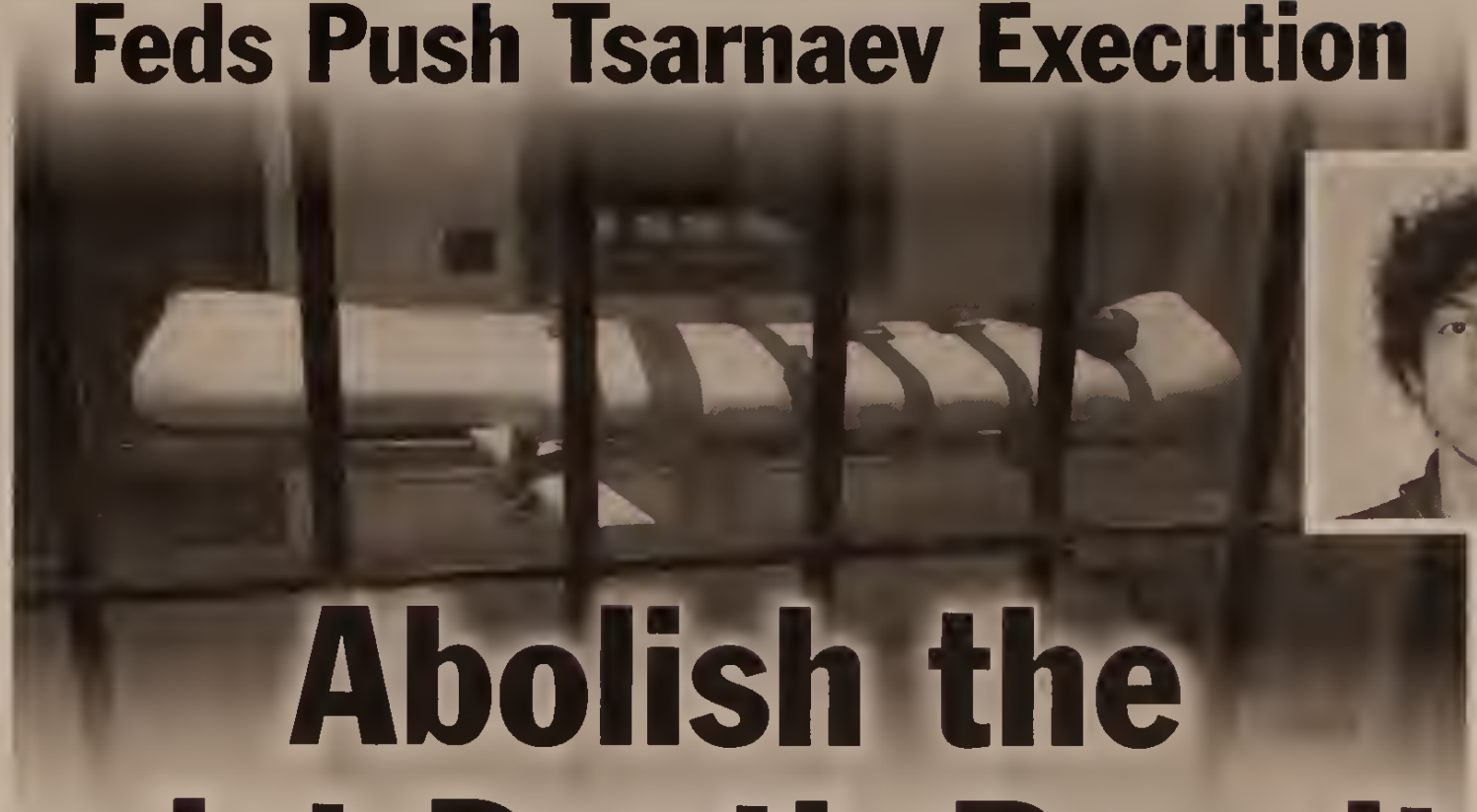
WORKERS VANGUARD

Feds Push Tsarnaev Execution



Sygma, FBI (inset)

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Texas lethal injection chamber. Inset: Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.

When a Boston jury handed down a death sentence last month to 21-year-old Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, a U.S. citizen of Chechen Muslim descent, it was the culmination of the sort of show trial in which the U.S. rulers revel. The Obama Justice Department seized on the case as soon as Tsarnaev was arrested for involvement in the 2013 Boston marathon bombing, a criminal act of indiscriminate terror that left three dead and over 260 wounded. Waving the Boston bombing as a bloody shirt, the federal government pulled out all the stops to pack Tsarnaev off to death row and put a shine back on capital punishment.

The Feds were not about to be frustrated by the fact that Massachusetts abolished the death penalty decades ago. These overseers of the entire machinery of bourgeois state repression simply took the case to federal court, where they repeatedly brushed aside defense offers of a guilty plea in return for life without parole. At trial, prosecutors "death qualified" the jury by striking anyone opposed to capital punishment in a city where the overwhelming majority is opposed to putting Tsarnaev to death.

As Marxists, we oppose the death penalty on principle, for the guilty as well as the innocent, and Tsarnaev is no exception. We do not accord the state the right to decide who lives and who dies. The great majority of those on death row are poor and disproportionately black and Latino, lacking decent legal representation and thus excluded from the justice that only money may buy.

Public support for the death penalty has eroded over the last two decades in the wake of the exonerations of scores of innocent death-row inmates, along with a series of ghoulishly botched executions. Nineteen states, including most recently Nebraska, have banned capital punishment, and another eight states have moratoriums. The last federal execution took place in 2003, with Washington effectively putting a moratorium on executions five years ago.

Nevertheless, both capitalist parties—Democratic as well as Republican—are determined to maintain this ultimate sanction in the arsenal of state repression. Even when, shortly after a horror-show execution in Oklahoma last year, Barack Obama directed then-Attorney General Eric Holder to review the implementation of the death penalty, the president reiterated his support for capital punishment. The White House especially wants to have the option to execute so-called terrorists and those convicted of "crimes against the state" such as treason or killing a federal officer.

The current administration is seeking to remove the cobwebs from the federal apparatus of execution, which was given a major boost by the last Democratic regime. By signing both the 1994 Federal Death Penalty Act and the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, Bill Clinton vastly expanded the federal death penalty and gutted the *habeas corpus* right of state prisoners to have federal courts review their convictions. Soon after, the assembly line of death kicked into high gear, reaching 98 executions in 1999.

In addition to shining a light on the bloodthirstiness of this country's capitalist rulers, the Boston case starkly illustrates the all-sided shredding of civil liberties under the rubric of the "war on terror." Right after the marathon bombing, the Boston metropolitan area was placed under a virtual state of martial law as National Guardsmen and SWAT teams backed by helicopters and armored vehicles sealed off streets and carried out house-to-house searches. The federal dragnet extended to three UMass-Dartmouth students who were sentenced earlier this month to three to six years in prison for removing Tsarnaev's backpack and laptop from his dorm room after the bombing.

With Republicans initially howling to dispatch Tsarnaev by branding him an "enemy combatant" and locking him away indefinitely, the Obama White House preferred to prove that the federal courts could just as effectively dispatch the accused, while adding a thin veneer of due process. How thin a veneer was evident from the moment of Tsarnaev's arrest, when government officials boasted that they would not even make a pretense of honoring his basic Constitutional rights. Tsarnaev was interrogated for hours at his hospital bed without a *Miranda* warning and despite his repeated requests for a lawyer. With the Justice Department out to get rid of *Miranda* protections altogether for alleged terrorists, the creeping police state now has another precedent for gutting procedural rights for the accused more broadly.

Victims of legal lynching: Troy Davis, with mother, executed in September 2011 (left). Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham) days before his execution, June 2000 (right).

Once in custody, Tsarnaev was gagged with "special administrative measures" isolating him from other inmates and denying him access to the media. His visits, calls and mail were monitored and restricted to family members and legal counsel. Tsarnaev's lawyers were also prevented from disclosing their communications with their client except for purposes of legal defense.

The U.S. government also asserts its right, both at home and abroad, to simply blow away those whom it views as "terrorists," as in the case of Ibragim Todashev, a 27-year-old acquaintance of Tsarnaev who was gunned down two years ago in his Florida apartment after a 4-hour interrogation by an FBI agent and two Massachusetts state troopers. After Todashev was killed, one of the troopers texted his fellow officers "well done" and "great work." Predictably, it was first claimed that Todashev threatened the officers with a knife, but a week later the Feds admitted he was unarmed.

When it comes to terror, blood-soaked U.S. imperialism has no equal. Its history of raining death and destruction across the globe is long and sordid—witness everything from the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and massive napalming in Vietnam to the Obama administration's drone warfare in Central Asia and the Near East. Within the U.S., fighters for labor's cause as well as black militants have been targeted for death by the capitalist state over the years—such as anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti, executed in Massachusetts in 1927, countless striking workers killed on picket lines by cops and National Guardsmen in the early decades of the 20th century, and the 38 Black Panthers assassinated by the FBI's COINTELPRO conspiracy in the 1960s and '70s.

The ruling class is ever eager to bolster its repressive state apparatus, an instrument of organized violence against working people and the oppressed in defense of capitalist profit and rule. Labor has every interest in fighting the federal government's drive to strip people of rights

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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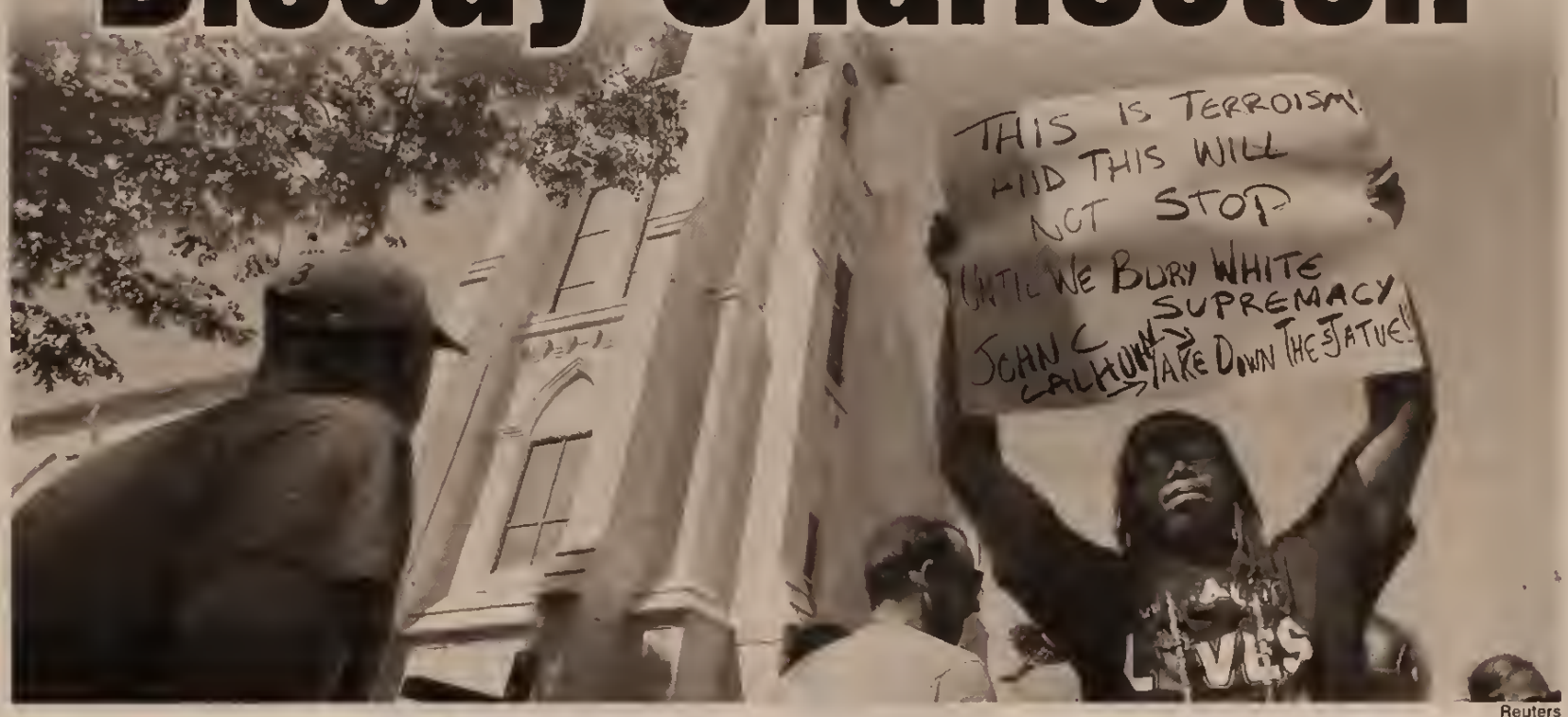
No. 1071 — 10 July 2015

Racist Terror and the Legacy of Slavery

Bloody Charleston



Reuters

Protest sign outside Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, three days after horrific racist massacre. Sign demands removal of nearby statue of South Carolina politician John C. Calhoun, rabid supporter of slavery.

The coldblooded massacre of nine black people in Charleston's Emanuel AME Church by a 21-year-old white supremacist is a searing manifestation of the racist terror and reaction at the heart of American capitalism. As Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black radical and former Black Panther who was framed up and sentenced to death for his defiance of this racist order, declared in a radio commentary from prison: "White supremacy is the mother's milk of Charleston, of South Carolina, of the South, of America. For surely as slavery funded and built America, the underlying principle was the devaluation, exploitation and oppression of Black life. It's the only thing that makes the church massacre in Charleston even remotely intelligible."

Bourgeois politicians from across the political spectrum, from America's first black president to the son of archsegregationist Strom Thurmond, have rushed to exploit the killings, cynically promoting "racial healing" and Christian charity and calling to "forgive your enemies." For them, the bloodbath in Charleston was a chance to divert attention from the near-daily killings of unarmed black men at the hands of racist cops and to quell the protests against their gendarmes.

President Barack Obama promised that the FBI and the local police would "make sure that justice is served." It was local police who just three months ago killed 50-year-old Walter Scott in North Charleston, shooting him five times in the back. Likewise, in the 1968 Orangeburg Massacre, South Carolina highway patrolmen gunned down students protesting segregation, killing three and injuring 27. Fascists like Dylann Roof and vigilantes like George Zimmerman, the killer of Trayvon Martin, are not exceptions to the rule of racist law and order but auxiliaries to the far more powerful murder apparatus of the capitalist state—the cops, the prisons and the military. These state forces are the main source of racist violence.

In the same statement, Obama seized on outrage over the massacre to push for more gun control, arguing: "Innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hands on a gun." No! Innocent people were killed because they were unarmed and defenseless in the face of a fascist murderer who was emboldened by the racism that pervades every aspect and institution of American society.

Gun control laws are a means to enforce a monopoly of violence in the hands of the capitalist state. Throughout U.S. history, they have been used to prevent black people from being able to defend themselves against race terrorists. In 1961, Robert F. Williams, the head of the NAACP in Monroe, North Carolina, was hounded out of the country for organizing a defense squad against racist attacks. The Klan

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On the Charleston Massacre: Who's Next?

Hate Your Enemy!

The following contribution was submitted to Workers Vanguard *by Spartacist League Central Committee member Don Alexander.*

The soil is extremely fertile for resurgent racist terror and fascist provocations. Too few victorious strikes; too few victories wrested through bitter struggles from the hands of the exploiters prepare greater defeats.

The Charleston massacre is one of the bloody signatures of the Obama years. The nine black people mowed down at the hands of a vicious racist killer is not just a "wake-up call" but, more importantly, the moment to raise in its full force the question: What road to black liberation, revolutionary integrationism or submission to the yoke? No amount of praying can cover up the truth that, 150 years after the end of the Civil War, black skin is still being hunted.

We view the burning questions of the day from a class standpoint. Whose interests are served, the oppressed or oppressor, the exploited or the exploiters? Depending upon the answer is the only way to judge one's friends or one's enemies. As long as our class remains tied to the parties and agencies of the class enemy, the exploiters win hands down. We need our own party—a revolutionary workers party that is a tribune of the people, that tears the masses away from capitalist ideology promulgated by the ruling class and their political agents within the labor movement.

The fight for black liberation through socialist revolution is the only way out. A class-struggle program for black liberation—a revolutionary integrationist fight against the special oppression of black people, not on the basis of inch at a time, go slow gradualism (i.e., liberal integrationism), but militant, racially integrated class struggle for black freedom. This fight is bound up with the liberation of the entire working class from the brutal capitalist system.

"Separate but equal" is effectively the reality in this country. The brutal whips of the modern-day slaveholders emanate from the White House (with a smile), the halls of Congress, the Supreme Court, the "Justice" Department, no matter who are their occupants. As they shed crocodile tears for the dead, their entire system reeks of capitalist greed, venality, mass murder, brutal poverty, repression and hunger targeting workers, black people, Latinos and immigrants, women, gays and youth.

Don't forget that it was only recently that the Democrats—black and white—and their liberal allies were basking in the glory of bloody Selma to cover themselves with the mantle of civil rights martyrs, while pretending that this was "ancient history." At the same time, their lying capitalist propaganda machine endlessly repeats the big lie that "much progress has been made and there is still work to be done." In other words, we can be half-free and half-slave. NO! BLACK PEOPLE ARE OPPRESSED BY THIS DECREPIT, VIOLENTLY RACIST CAPITALIST SYSTEM.

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Is Russia Imperialist?

25 March 2015

Workers Vanguard,

I do have one political question. *WV* did mention Russia was a regional power and not an imperialist power, as regards the Ukraine. True, Russia is an economic shell compared to what it was when it was the old Soviet Union but they still have an enormous amount of nuclear weapons and they do continue to occupy areas, such as Chechnya, leading to some question as to what it takes to qualify as a true imperialist state?

I have traveled extensively in the Ukraine and it is obvious, that much of Eastern Ukraine and certainly Crimea, are very, very Russian. Certainly, one must oppose NATO and hence, American aggression. Remembering the Russian Revolution however, at what point does the slogan become: "Turn the guns around—the main enemy is at home"?

Red Greetings,
Lawrence of Seattle

WV replies:

The criteria used by the reader to suggest that Russia may be imperialist are essentially military: the fact that it has nuclear weapons, and it waged two savage wars against Chechnya. But military might and aggression do not in and of themselves define a country as imperialist. As Lenin summarized it, "Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed" (*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* [1916]). This domination of the world by a few imperialist powers is the biggest barrier to the economic development and social progress of the less developed countries.

The constant struggle of the imperialist powers for access to markets, raw materials and cheap labor leads to the recurrence of imperialist wars to acquire and protect assets in foreign countries. Russia does not play a role in the carve-up of the world on a global scale. While Russia's significant military might, especially its nuclear arsenal, makes it harder for the imperialists to push it around, Russia does not invade and bomb countries across the globe as the U.S. does. Nor does it, like even second-rate imperialist powers such as Britain and France, send troops to faraway places to advance its national interests.

Russia is a regional power, albeit with imperial ambitions. Post-Soviet Russia has never intervened militarily outside the territory of the former Soviet Union except for a very limited intervention in the former Yugoslavia in the mid 1990s when the Russian forces acted as soft cops for NATO. Moscow has waged two brutal wars in Chechnya to prevent the oppressed Chechens from asserting their right to secede from Russia (a right that we support). But many countries that are not imperialist oppress minority peoples within their borders, for instance, the Tamils in Sri Lanka or the Rohingya in Myanmar (Burma). Russia also fought over pro-Russian South Ossetia with Georgia, which was backed by the U.S. In that 2008 war between two non-imperialist capitalist countries, we had a position of revolutionary defeatism: the class interests of the workers of Georgia and Russia lay in a struggle to overthrow their respective capitalist rulers through socialist revolution.

Arising out of capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, post-Soviet Russia represents a historically unique and unprecedented phenomenon. Because Russia's industrial development took place primarily through the collectivized economy of a workers state, Russia does not today neatly fit into the categories of long-established capitalist countries.

Russia's economy, bolstered by high prices for its fossil fuels over much of the last decade, has recovered somewhat from the depths to which it fell after the capitalist "shock therapy" of the 1990s. But it does not have the economy of an imperialist power. Russia's new capitalist rulers got their hands on a large industrial base and extensive infrastructure in a country with enormous natural resources. However, its industry lags significantly behind other advanced capitalist countries in technique and product quality. No branch of Russian manufacturing is competitive on the international market except for the armaments industry (mainly inherited from the USSR).

In contrast to imperialist countries, which are characterized by the export of capital, Russia primarily exports natural resources, not capital. Russia's economy is very dependent on its oil and gas sector, which in 2013 accounted for 16 percent of its GDP, 52 percent of federal government revenues and over 70 percent of exports. What passes for "investment" abroad mostly takes the form of capital flight to imperialist centers or to tax havens.

Sections of the German ruling class look to an alliance with Russia as a means to assert what they see as Germany's "natural" role as ruler of Eurasia. Even "Atlanticists" like Chancellor Angela Merkel strike a much less belligerent posture toward Russia than Washington does. To date, however, the U.S. and German rulers have maintained their alliance in terms of containing and reducing Russia's influence in the other countries of the former USSR. Thus, the German-dominated European Union has gone along with Washington in maintaining sanctions against Russia for its actions in Ukraine.

The existing imperialists, headed by the U.S., continue to work to keep Russia out of their club. The imperialist NATO alliance has expanded into East Europe (in the case of Estonia and Latvia, right up to Russia's borders), the U.S. is increasing its deployment of tanks and other heavy equipment in the region and, for the first time since the end of the Cold

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TROTSKY

Fight Capitalist Misery!

In a June 1865 report to the General Council of the First International, Karl Marx laid out for the first time in public his theory of surplus value—the unpaid portion of workers' labor that is the source of profit. In his conclusion, Marx emphasized that the working class must not only fight for higher wages and better conditions but also for the overthrow of the whole system of capitalist exploitation.

LENIN

The very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favour of the capitalist against the working man, and that consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labour* more or less to its *minimum limit*. Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour, and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent in their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto, *"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!"* they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, *"Abolition of the wages system!"*

—Karl Marx, *Value, Price and Profit* (1865)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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No. 1071 **10 July 2015**

On Crime and Punishment

6 May 2015

In the *WV* article on Attica, it is mentioned that in a socialist society the question of crime and punishment will be dealt with. I was wondering what would be done in an egalitarian socialist society about this question. Would there be prisons? Or would the focus be on the rehabilitation of people who might stray out of the lines. Personally, I do not think that there would be much crime in this sort of society. Also, things like drugs would be decriminalized, as well as prostitution. Then there is the obsession with sex crimes and pornography. Out here they recently arrested a thirty year old woman for supposedly raping two sixteen year old males. The whole thing stinks to high heaven, and they are ruining this woman's life. I agree with the SL position that it is all a question of consent. I do not think that these two youth were forced by the woman.

Comradely,
NB

WV replies:

In the conclusion of "Attica: The Nightmare That Never Ends" (*WV* No. 1065, 3 April), we wrote, "To lay the basis for abolishing the whole wretched system of crime and punishment requires a workers revolution to sweep away the bourgeois state and expropriate the class in whose interest the state is administered." There can be no fair or humane system of justice for the working class and oppressed under the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Much of the theft, fraud and violence in society is a result of the material scarcity inherent to capitalism and is bolstered by reactionary ideologies like racism and bigotry.

The criminal code is written to justify and enforce the capitalist system of exploitation based on the private ownership of the means of production. In reality, the capitalists are the biggest crooks. As the murderer Macheath in Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* remarked: "What is the robbing of a bank compared to the founding of a bank?" The capitalists require a huge apparatus of repression (the courts, cops and prisons as well as the military) in order to secure their rule over the exploited masses. The bosses' hired thugs are most casual dispensers of violence against workers and the oppressed, dealing out death with impunity, especially to black people and Latinos.

The capitalist class' whole system of punishment is based on religious precepts of retribution and penitence. Thus, they inflict vengeful suffering—from incarceration to solitary confinement to the death penalty—on transgressors of their code, to make them "pay for their sins."

As we described in our last issue, the early Soviet workers state, issuing out of the victorious Russian October Revolution of 1917, pointed to what is possible when

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CORRECTION

In the article "The Police and the 1918-19 German Revolution" (*WV* No. 1060, 23 January), we said: "On 4 January 1919, the KPD's *Die Rote Fahne* wrote: 'The police force was trying to be a revolutionary police force, rather than actively or passively serving the counterrevolution,' thus reinforcing in the working class the widespread misconception that Eichhorn and his cops could be the guarantors of the revolution." In fact, the issue of *Die Rote Fahne* quoted was dated 5 January 1919.

L.A. Union Tops Minimize Minimum Wage

How Low Can You Go

Following in the footsteps of Seattle, San Francisco and other cities, last month the Los Angeles City Council approved an ordinance to gradually raise the minimum wage from $9 to $15 by 2020, with an even longer phase-in for some workers. Days before that vote, however, a provision was put forward to exempt companies with a unionized workforce from honoring the new wage increase. One would expect such a proposal from the likes of the Chamber of Commerce, but the culprit here was Rusty Hicks, head of the AFL-CIO's Los Angeles County Federation of Labor!

What gives? Like many pondering what happened, especially with the unions campaigning for minimum-wage ordinances nationwide, one member of the SEIU service workers union Local 721 denounced the plan as a "real slap in the face." Workers have every reason to be angry. But for the labor misleaders there is no contradiction. Whether lobbying legislators to create a new but still poverty-level minimum wage or moving to ensure union wages can drop below that official floor, they proceed from the standpoint of what is acceptable to the capitalists.

Hicks tried to sell the minimum-wage waiver on the grounds that it would allow greater freedom for "employers and their employees to come to a mutual agreement that works for them"—e.g., the "freedom" for workers to sacrifice wages purportedly in exchange for other benefits. Although the union exemption in L.A. is on the back burner for now, in city after city the labor tops have succeeded in including such opt-outs in minimum-wage ordinances. As we observed in the article "Fight Poverty Wages Through Class Struggle!" (*WV* No. 1052, 19 September 2014), these exemptions "are an affirmation by the union tops that they will not challenge the wretched compensation they have negotiated in subservience to employer demands."

Mounting any such challenge requires a willingness to engage in class battle. But the labor bureaucracy long ago renounced the very class-struggle methods to shut down services and production—mass pickets, secondary boycotts, sit-down strikes—that originally built the unions. Instead it has pursued a partnership of labor and capital, which is a fraud, and committed itself to playing by the bosses' rules. The minimum-wage waiver is the latest in a lengthy list of ploys concocted by the union tops to entice the bosses into recognizing unions through demonstrations of their reasonableness. Such displays of "good faith" have spelled disaster for the unions, whose overall membership rate has sunk to its lowest point in a century. Offering up your soul to the devil won't get you a free pass to heaven.

Reuters

Rally for higher wages for fast food workers in Los Angeles, 4 September 2014, part of nationwide series of protests.

At one time, strong unions set a pay standard that compelled non-union employers to also lift wages. But the decades-long onslaught of anti-union attacks by the capitalist exploiters and their political henchmen in both the Democratic and Republican parties has turned the clock back on wages and work conditions for all workers. The labor bureaucracy has helped propel this race to the bottom, peddling the lie that the working class must sacrifice to keep American business competitive.

More than a century ago, American socialist Daniel De Leon described such conservative trade-union leaders as the "labor lieutenants of capital." He had in mind the likes of American Federation of Labor head Samuel Gompers, a leader of the racially exclusionary, hidebound craft unions who encouraged scabbing on other unions and was a sworn enemy of socialism.

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Albert Woodfox Must Be Freed!

On June 8, U.S. District Court judge James Brady ordered the immediate release of class-war prisoner Albert Woodfox, the longest-serving U.S. prisoner in solitary confinement—and barred the State of Louisiana from subjecting Woodfox to a retrial. But four days later, a federal appeals panel ruled that he be kept in jail pending a ruling by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on whether Woodfox will face what would be his third trial for a crime he did not commit. Framed up for the 1972 fatal stabbing of a prison guard, Woodfox has been the victim of a racist vendetta based on his radical Black Panther Party activities within Louisiana's infamous Angola prison. Woodfox's conviction was overturned yet again in May 2012 and that ruling was upheld in November 2014, but he was indicted again in February at the urging of Louisiana attorney general James D. "Buddy" Caldwell. ***Woodfox's continued incarceration is an outrage! Free Albert Woodfox now!***

Albert Woodfox's jailers have had it in for him since he started a Black Panther chapter in Angola prison shortly after his incarceration there in 1971. With fellow inmates Herman Wallace and Robert King, together later known as the Angola Three, Woodfox helped organize work stoppages and other protests against the horrific prison conditions. Woodfox and Wallace were falsely convicted of the 1972 killing of guard Brent Miller. Not a shred of physical evidence existed, and the key "eyewitness" was bribed for his trial testimony. King, who was framed for killing a fellow inmate in 1973, was released in 2001 and has been active in the fight to free Woodfox. Wallace was finally freed in October 2013 and died of liver cancer three days later. In truly vindictive fashion, Attorney General Caldwell had Wallace indicted again for Miller's murder the day before his death!

WBRZ-TV

Albert Woodfox, 68, walks into Louisiana courthouse, February 12.

The state is determined to see Woodfox die in prison, despite much public outrage and the fact that his convictions have been repeatedly overturned on the grounds of "unconstitutional" practices and racial bias. In a recent statement, the prison guard's widow herself pleaded to set Woodfox free: "I wish the state of Louisiana would stop spending all this money paying lawyers to keep Albert in prison for even longer than the 43 years he has already been there." She pointed to his innocence, noting that the bloody fingerprint at the scene of the murder did not belong to any of the Angola Three.

Woodfox has remained entombed in solitary confinement for all these years because of his prior political activities. Angola prison warden Burl Cain insisted in 2008 that even if Woodfox were not guilty, he would be kept in "closed-cell restriction" (the prison's euphemism for solitary) because of his "Black Pantherism." As for "Buddy" Caldwell, he called Woodfox—who is 68 years old and suffers from hepatitis C, diabetes and a weak heart—"the most dangerous person on the planet." Indeed, Woodfox's persecution highlights the decades-long war by the capitalist state against Black Panther Party militants. In the 1960s, the Panthers were targeted for elimination by the FBI's COINTELPRO operation. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed and hundreds more railroaded into prison hellholes for decades, where many died. Among the former Black Panther supporters still incarcerated are Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, all of whom, like Woodfox, receive monthly stipends from the Partisan Defense Committee. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

The state's treatment of Woodfox is intended to be a chilling example for all those who speak out against the horrible conditions in prison hellholes. He has spent more than half of his life in a closet-size, windowless cell for 23 hours a day. Despite being under constant surveillance, he was subjected to visual body cavity searches up to six times a day. Kept in total isolation, eating alone and unable to attend religious or educational activities, Woodfox described in 2012 the emotional effect of years in solitary: "I ask that for a moment you imagine yourself standing at the edge of nothingness, looking at emptiness."

Woodfox continues to languish in isolation behind a steel door at the West Feliciana Parish Detention Center. On August 31, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments on whether he will face a third trial. We demand that Albert Woodfox be freed immediately! ■

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August.**

Our next issue will be dated August 7.

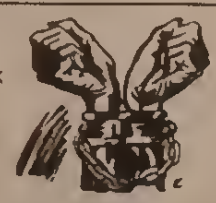
Bay Area • PDC Annual Fundraiser BBQ

Come hear updates on class-war prisoners.
Mumia Abu-Jamal's life in danger—Free him now!
Time for labor to take a stand against racist cop terror!

Sunday, July 19, 1 to 4 p.m.

Crolls Garden Picnic Area, Crab Cove Regional Park
1252 McKay Ave., Alameda
(2nd BBQ area from Visitors Center)

Public transport: AC Transit 51A (from East Bay)
or O (from SF) bus lines to Webster and Santa Clara, walk to park



The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

(510) 839-0852 • pdcbayarea@fastmail.net • partisandefense.org

Support the work of the PDC! Bring your checkbook!

Montreal May Day Leaflet:

Mobilize the Working Class Against Capitalist Austerity!

Tens of thousands of Quebec students staged another round of mass strikes and demonstrations this spring against attacks by the Liberal Party government of that province. The protests did not reach the level of the 2012 student strike, which saw marches of up to a quarter million people and drew in layers of the working class. But once again, students and their allies faced brutal repression at the hands of the police. On May Day, the cops violently attacked a demonstration called by the Convergence des Luttes Anticapitalistes (Anti-Capitalist Convergence) after only ten minutes, firing tear gas at protesters and bystanders alike and arresting nearly 100 people.

Late last year, some Quebec union leaders threatened to organize a mass "social strike" against austerity for May Day. But in the end, the bureaucrats who head the CSN and FTQ union federations did not even hold the traditional union May Day demn in Montreal. Instead, working-class anger against austerity was dissipated in a series of symbolic occupations and picket lines, while relatively small marches were held in cities and towns around Quebec.

We reprint below an adaptation of a leaflet issued in Montreal on April 25 by the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, and distributed by our comrades at student, labor and other protests in the city, including on May Day. The leaflet was translated and adapted by *Spartacist Canada*, which published it in No. 185, Summer 2015.

Spartacist Canada

Montreal, 29 November 2014: Thousands of workers protest against capitalist austerity.

SPARTACIST CANADA

The Liberal government of Philippe Couillard has unleashed its austerity campaign, attacking the workers' gains in the name of "balancing the budget." It is cutting salaries, pensions, social programs, health care, education, etc. While the 400,000 workers in the public-sector union Common Front get insulting offers from the government—a three percent raise over five years and a hike in the retirement age—the big corporations are raking in ever-growing profits and the latest government budget again offers them a plethora of gifts.

The union federations and other organizations have launched the Refusons l'Austérité [Refuse Austerity] collective. During March and April, tens of thousands of students went on strike to protest the austerity attacks. In response, the government has unleashed its guard dogs against student protesters. Police brutality and mass arrests are again common coin. Students at UQAM [Université du Québec à Montréal] face threats of expulsion for their political activities. On April 8 the administration brought the cops onto campus to prevent students from respecting strike votes. The cops then violently broke up the occupation of one of the campus buildings that evening. ***We demand: Drop the charges! Down with the UQAM administration's persecution of student militants! Cops and security guards off campus!***

The anger among the working class and among students is palpable, as shown by the many demonstrations that have brought out thousands of people. But the demands of their leaders are based on the false premise that capitalism is capable of serving the interests of everyone. The Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante [Association for Student Union Solidarity] (ASSÉ) calls on the government to "live up to its responsibilities and listen to the population" (ASSÉ, 12 November 2014). Meanwhile, the Refusons l'Austérité collective advises it to "spend more to boost the economy, and ensure the permanent continuation of public services and social programs" ("Solutions," refusons.org, undated). In fact the Liberal government, like all capitalist governments, fulfills its responsibilities by serving the interests of the bourgeoisie. Public services will never meet the workers' needs in an economic system characterized by periodic crises that block production, destroy wealth and inflict deep suffering on the working class and poor.

The capitalist class that owns the means of production—the factories, mines, transportation, etc.—has interests counterposed to those of the working class, which is forced to sell its labour power in order to survive. It is the workers who produce the goods and services that make society function, but a handful of capitalist parasites steals all the riches. To try and shore up its rate of profit, the bourgeoisie has to constantly cut wages, lay off workers and reduce public services. Since austerity is intrinsic to capitalism, the fight against it must be linked to a fight against the capitalist system.

Bellerose/Huffington Post

Quebec City cop shoots anti-austerity protester in face with tear gas canister, March 26.

Myth of the "Welfare State"

Internationally, workers and the oppressed face all-out austerity attacks. Europe has been shaken in recent years by many general strikes and impressive demonstrations against austerity. The desperate situation of millions of workers and the poor has fuelled the growing popularity of parties that present themselves as anti-austerity, such as Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece. But these are bourgeois parties loyal to the capitalist system. The Syriza government, elected on January 25, has backtracked on most of its already limited promises, capitulating to the diktats of the imperialist European Union. Now Syriza has accepted the extension of the hated bailout plan, promising to impose even more austerity.

In Quebec, union leaders and the student left counterpose to austerity the myth of the "welfare state" or "social state" that supposedly existed in the 1960s and 1970s. This period, known as the Quiet Revolution, saw a massive erosion of the power of the church and some reforms necessary for the development of a modern capitalist society. Yet it also corresponded to the emergence of a Québécois bourgeoisie which sought to institute an autonomous political economy where it would be the centre and the main beneficiary. In criticizing the politics of austerity, various leftists are spreading an incredible number of illusions, suggesting that in the 1960s and '70s the capitalist state cared about the situation of the working class and the oppressed.

According to the CSN bureaucrats, for example, the Liberal Party's agenda is to dismantle "the social state in Quebec which was set up 50 years ago" ("Solutions," refusons.org, undated). For ASSÉ, the role of the Quebec state at the time of the Quiet Revolution was to "guarantee citizens' welfare and emancipation" (Summary of "Evolution of Public Services in Quebec: Challenges and Perspectives," 1 October 2014). This jovial and idealized vision of the state denies the fact that capitalist society is divided into antagonistic classes. In Quebec as on the federal level, the capitalist state is a tool of the bourgeoisie to maintain its domination. In the words of Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution of October 1917 (the only victorious workers revolution in history), the state is "a machine for the domination of one class over another" ("The State," 1919).

It is an illusion to think that a state which passes repressive laws like P-6 [used to ban leftist demonstrations], which breaks strikes with its police and "emergency laws," which participates in imperialist wars in the Near East and constantly sends its armed forces to brutalize Native people can suddenly interest itself in the well-being of the working class and the fate of the oppressed. The true face and the heart of the bourgeois state is its apparatus of repression, composed of the police, standing army, prisons and courts. No matter which party runs it, the bourgeois state exists to defend the bosses' interests.

Whatever gains Quebec's workers and oppressed enjoy weren't given to them in a spirit of kindness by the bourgeois state. They were ***taken*** from the ruling class in the course of hard struggles by the labour movement. For example, the greater access to education established during the Quiet Revolution had been one of the historic demands of the unions. Nurses, teachers and government employees had to wage hard battles against the "modernizing" governments of the 1960s to win the right to unionization, through which they won better working conditions. But in the framework of capitalism these gains, which must absolutely be defended, are always partial and constantly reversible. The only perspective for putting an end to wage slavery is to fight for socialist revolution, in the course of which the bourgeois state will be destroyed and replaced by a state based on workers councils—in other words, the replacement of the dictatorship of the ***bourgeoisie*** by the dictatorship of the ***proletariat***.

The Social Power of the Working Class

Up to now it has mainly been students who have mobilized against austerity. Even if large and frequent student demonstrations can at times annoy the government or disturb some economic activity, they cannot attack the nerve centre of the capitalist

system. It is the workers who, when they strike and withdraw their labour power, stop the flow of production that generates the bourgeoisie's profits. Students, a petty-bourgeois social layer with no direct relationship to the means of production, do not have that kind of social power. Student struggles can be the spark for more general social conflicts, but in the final analysis the only solution is to ally with the workers movement.

The exploited working class, which is paid only enough to support itself and produce the next generation of workers, has no interest in the survival of the capitalist system. On the contrary, it objectively has every interest in its overthrow. The workers possess enormous power because of their role in production, their numbers and their organization. It is this power that could, for example, be mobilized against the brutal repression of students who are challenging capitalist austerity.

The Quebec proletariat has a rich history of militant struggles whose peak was the 1972 general strike. Little known among young workers and leftists today, the strike demonstrated the social power of the working class. It posed the question of political power: whether the workers or the capitalists would run society.

This semi-insurrectionary class struggle began in April 1972 with a large strike by the Common Front of the three union federations amid negotiations over public sector contracts. After ten days, the union leaders called for a return to work against the will of the workers, who wanted to continue the strike. The three union leaders, who were nonetheless accused by the bourgeois state of having disobeyed injunctions, were imprisoned by Bourassa's Liberal government, setting off a huge, spontaneous strike wave throughout Quebec in May. More than 300,000 workers in the mines, hospitals, airports, factories—in short, in all the key industrial sectors—went on strike. In cities such as Sept-Îles, Sorel, Thetford Mines and Joliette the workers seized radio stations, barricaded streets—in a word, they took control of the cities.

Only an appeal for calm by the three jailed leaders brought an end to the conflict, under the pretext of a negotiated agreement with the government. As we wrote in an article assessing this struggle:

> "In 1972 the determined militancy and combativity of the Québécois proletariat was pushed to the limit, to the point that what became brutally clear was the need for a proletarian internationalist program and leadership.... But where the nationalist Quebec labor bureaucrats used 1972 to build labor support for the bourgeois-nationalist PQ [Parti Québécois], the Maple Leaf jingoists heading up the English-Canadian labor movement attempted to keep the general strike from spilling over into their own ranks through orgies of chauvinism."
>
> —"Lessons of the 1972 Quebec General Strike: From the Barricades to the Parti Québécois," *Spartacist Canada* No. 57, March 1983

For a Class-Struggle Leadership in the Unions!

The union leaderships in the 1960s and 1970s were pushed to lead more militant actions by a base that was more combative than today. However this militancy was channelled into the bourgeois nationalism of the PQ. Today the union tops are completely locked into the framework of bourgeois legalism, very reluctant to unleash strikes and, as in the past, remain an obstacle to mobilizing the social power of the proletariat against capitalism. They are committed to the smooth functioning of the bourgeois economy and seek collaboration with the ruling class and its government.

The example of the Coalition pour la Libre Négotiation [Coalition for Free Negotiations]—set up to fight against Bill 3, which attacks the pensions of municipal workers—shows clearly how the union bureaucrats refuse to unleash class struggles to defend the workers' interests. After having vaguely raised the spectre of a strike in October, the Coalition leadership chose to refer the issue to the Superior Court, a process that will take months, if not years. The Coalition's strategy is reduced to challenging the constitutionality of Bill 3 before the very courts that regularly impose injunctions against striking workers and impose penalties on youth who demonstrate against austerity.

Spartacist Canada

Montreal, March 2012: Mass protest against college tuition hikes.

But the worst crime of the Coalition leadership is surely to have included the cops. The police, like prison guards and security guards, are not workers. Their job is to preserve the system of capitalist exploitation through organized violence. When workers go on strike, the bourgeoisie sends the cops to break up picket lines and arrest strikers. The workers movement must fight independently of the forces of the bourgeois state. That is why we say: ***cops, security guards, prison guards out of the unions!***

In addition, almost all the union leaders give open or tacit support to the PQ. Daniel Roy, Quebec director of the Steelworkers union, has publicly supported Martine Ouellet's candidacy for PQ leader, presenting the PQ as the party of the "middle class" and calling to "rebuild bridges" with it (*Le Devoir*, 22 January). The PQ is a bourgeois party, dedicated to safeguarding the interests of the Québécois capitalists. At the beginning of the 1980s, René Lévesque broke the strike of the Common Front unions. Then in the 1990s, Lucien Bouchard slashed public services with his "zero deficit" campaign. More recently, it was the government of Pauline Marois that broke the construction strike by passing an emergency law. The fact that Pierre Karl Péladeau, the big bourgeois "lockout king," is the leading candidate to become the PQ's new leader [and has subsequently become such] makes its anti-working-class character crystal clear. It's the same story every time: a Liberal government attacks the workers and the most impoverished; the union leaders channel widespread anger into support to the PQ; the PQ takes over and mounts its own attacks.

The heart of the matter is the nationalism pushed by the union leaderships. Nationalism is a bourgeois ideology that serves to tie the oppressed to their oppressors by claiming that they have common "national interests." The Canadian working class has long been deeply divided along national lines, reflecting the historic oppression of the Québécois nation within the Canadian state. Québécois nationalism is nourished by the "Canadian unity" chauvinism spread by the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party] and the union tops in English Canada. In response to this chauvinism, the Quebec union bureaucracy waves the [Quebec flag] fleur de lys and pushes the workers into the arms of the nationalists, especially the PQ. We advocate independence for Quebec in order to take the national question off the political agenda and show the workers of both nations that "their" respective bourgeoisies are not their ally against "the French" or "*les Anglais*," but their class enemy.

We oppose any privileges granted to languages and to nations. We denounce the imposition of English as the language of work where the workers are French-speaking. In March, the majority francophone FTQ workers building the Université de Montréal Hospital Centre denounced the predominance of English in the construction blueprints and instructions that they receive. This puts their safety in danger and violates their right to work in their own language.

As adversaries of all nationalism, we equally oppose the Charter of the French Language (Law 101), which makes French the official language of Quebec and thus imposes discriminatory restrictions on English-speaking and immigrant minorities. Marxists oppose laws which impose "official languages," as well as school systems based on language or religion. The unity of francophone, anglophone and immigrant workers can only be created on the basis of upholding the equality of languages.

It is necessary to forge oppositions inside the unions that will replace the union bureaucracy with a *class-struggle* leadership. Such a leadership will politically arm the workers to wage hard-fought battles against the capitalist exploiters. This task goes hand-in-hand with the fight to build a revolutionary workers party. Such a party is needed to arm the workers with the understanding of the need to struggle for a socialist revolution in order to put an end to austerity and capitalism once and for all.

The Workers Movement Must Defend the Muslim Minority!

One of the main tasks of the labour movement is the defense of immigrants and ethnic and religious minorities. The campaign of racist hysteria pushed by the state against Muslims has recently redoubled in intensity. Mosques have been shut down by some municipalities and a Court of Quebec judge even refused to hear the case of a Muslim woman on the pretext that she was wearing a veil. While the veil is a symbol and instrument of women's oppression, it is necessary to oppose government attacks against the democratic rights of Muslims, including the right to wear the veil.

These attacks have given a boost to the racists who have stepped up their acts of vandalism against mosques (notably in Quebec City, Limoilou, Sainte-Foy and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu). Under the banner of Pegida Québec (a racist movement that started in Germany which opposes the so-called "Islamization of the West"),

Spartacist Canada

Ligue Trotskyste calls on workers movement to defend Muslims at March 28 protest in Montreal against racist Pegida Québec outfit.

some people even tried to organize a reactionary anti-Muslim parade in the heart of Little Maghreb in Montreal in March. Hundreds of leftist and anti-racist militants mobilized and spiked this provocation.

Racism is intrinsic to the system of capitalist exploitation and the bourgeoisie ceaselessly resorts to such campaigns to divide the workers according to their different origins. The PQ hypocritically

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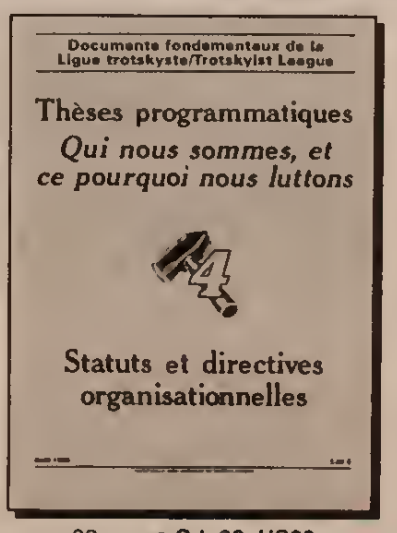

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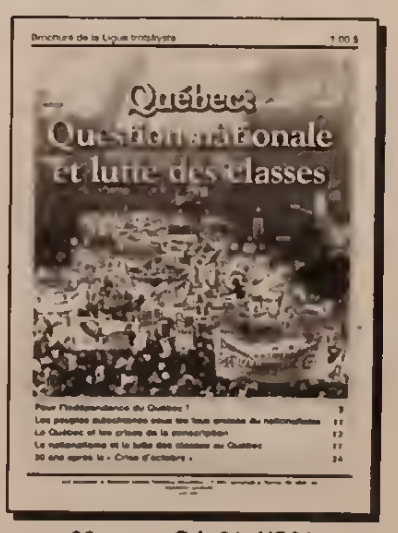

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San Francisco 1984

We Tore Down the Flag of Slavery!

WV Photo

15 April 1984: Spartacist League supporter Richard Bradley climbing flagpole in front of San Francisco Civic Center to rip down Confederate battle flag.

When Bree Newsome pulled down the Confederate flag—the banner of fascist Ku Klux Klan terror, akin to the Nazi swastika—from in front of the South Carolina statehouse in Columbia on June 27, she gave brief, heroic expression to an anger felt far beyond the Lowcountry over the bloody massacre in Charleston ten days earlier.

The young black activist's exemplary act of protest recalled a series of events three decades ago, not in a bastion of the Old South ruled by Republican nut jobs, but 2,500 miles away in liberal San Francisco. *San Francisco Chronicle* journalist Peter Hartlaub recounted in a June 21 posting on his SFGate.com blog that the Confederate battle flag used to fly in the S.F. Civic Center Plaza. Hartlaub wrote that he's not sure when the flag "came down for good." The answer is 1984, when supporters of the Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth League and Labor Black League for Social Defense removed it in the face of strenuous efforts to keep it flying by the city's then mayor Dianne Feinstein, now a longtime leader of the Democratic Party in the Senate known for pushing U.S. imperialist wars and NSA snooping.

On 15 April 1984, SL and LBL supporter Richard Bradley, clad in the Civil War uniform of a Union Army soldier, scaled a 50-foot flagpole at the S.F. Civic Center and ripped down the Confederate flag of slavery that had flown over the city for too many years. At ground level, what was left of the flag was burned by a member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 6.

As the hated symbol of racism and Klan terror was set ablaze, a crowd of black people, trade unionists and socialists broke into jubilant cheers and a chorus of "John Brown's Body" rang out. Black people in the Bay Area welcomed the victory as their own; press clippings make clear that people across the city were glad to be rid of the insult.

At the time, Feinstein, who was in the running for the Democratic vice presidential nomination, was seeking to curry favor with the Dixiecrats who would be arriving in town three months later for the Democratic National Convention. She had the flag put back up—a racist provocation that came one day after the outrageous acquittal of a KKK/Nazi death squad who had gunned down five leftists, civil rights activists and union organizers in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1979. Bradley and the SL responded by going right back and tearing the new flag to pieces, just hours after Feinstein had hoisted it.

Bradley, who knew well from his childhood in South Carolina what that flag stood for, was arrested for the second time and would be put on trial for "vandalism." In the eyes of Feinstein and the racist cops, he was a criminal for tearing down the slavocracy's rag, but in the Bay Area, Ritchie was a local hero, unable to walk into a bar or restaurant without having a drink or meal bought for him. Telegrams and phone calls poured into the mayor's office, including from local union leaders, forcing Feinstein to back down and promise that the hated flag would not fly again.

Bradley climbed the flagpole a third time, this time to put up a replica of the historic Union garrison flag that flew over Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor when Confederate forces fired the opening shots of the Civil War. Demonstrating again her scorn for those who fought to smash slavery, Feinstein vindictively had the *Union* flag removed and it was shredded.

The actions of Bradley and the SL garnered support and gratitude far and wide, including from the incomparable writer Gore Vidal, who inscribed a copy of his new novel *Lincoln* with the words "Lincoln would also have wanted the flag's symbolic removal." On June 4, Bradley's trial ended with a hung jury (eight for acquittal). One juror told Bradley, as he shook his hand, "I would have done it if I had the guts." The juror donated $20 to the defense and bought a subscription to *Workers Vanguard*. A week later, in an attempt to avoid further embarrassment for the city administration, Feinstein's district attorney moved to dismiss all charges, over the strenuous objections of the defense with Bradley insisting on his day in court.

But the story didn't end there. Feinstein just would not let it die. At the end of June, on the same flagpole that Bradley had twice scaled to remove the Confederate battle flag, the mayor raised the "Stars and Bars," the first flag of the Confederacy. That flag was a call to arms for the slaveholders in 1861, just as the Confederate flag is today for the paramilitary KKK and Nazi killers. It was moreover an affront to the history of California, which entered the Union as a free state in 1850 and supplied troops for the Union Army.

In the early morning hours of June 29, anti-racist militants not only took down the flag of slavery but also felled the pole. One of these union workers later wrote to *Workers Vanguard*, describing the carefully planned action. His report began: "Using an acetylene cutting torch we first cut out a wedge, or fish mouth, to determine the direction of the fall," and it went on to detail the safety precautions taken to ensure no one was injured.

The Spartacist League saw to it that the Confederate flag, the banner of racist terror, didn't fly at the S.F. Civic Center. We have a long and proud history of fighting for black freedom based on the understanding that it will be fully achieved through a third, socialist American revolution. Join us in this task. Finish the Civil War! ■

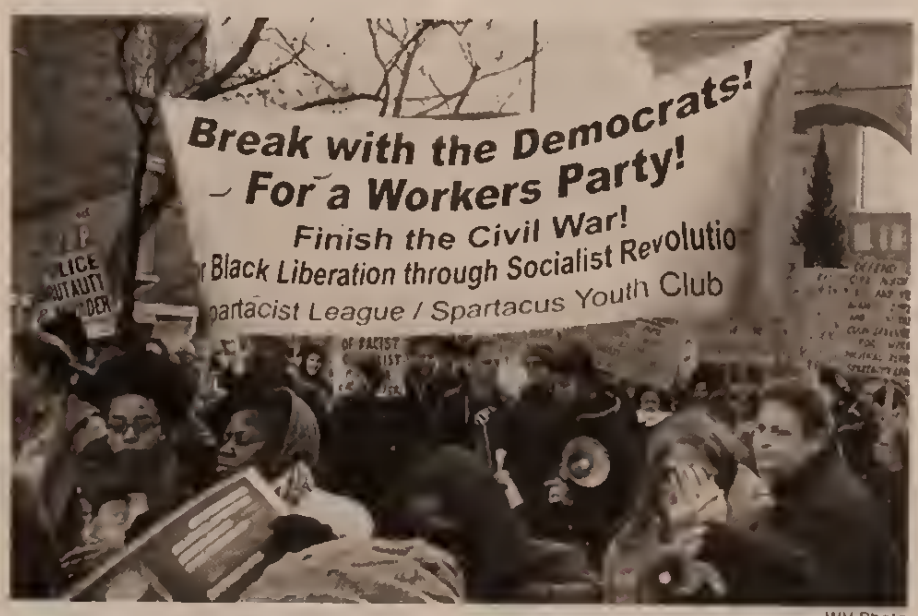
Who's Next?...

(continued from page 1)

Black oppression—the legacy of slavery and segregation—has been and remains the foundation of "free world" racist American capitalism. Look around—the only institutions that black people have "taken over" are its jails and prisons. The men and women, young and old, gunned down in a black church form an unbreakable link with the thousands who perished before them through countless lynchings and police murders.

This could happen again. Multiracial labor's power should be mobilized to strike a blow at the modern-day lynchers. It is at the point of production and distribution, where its strength lies, where it can throw a wrench into the exploiters' machinery. This power is feared and hated by the bosses, their kept labor statesmen and capitalist politicians of all colors and sexes. The labor lieutenants of capital in Charleston and elsewhere view the world through the lens of what's good for the exploiters' profit system. In the course of class struggle, the Confederate flag must go the way of smallpox.

As the 2016 elections get underway, some of the capitalist politicians of both parties "see the light" and have started talking about removing this symbol of "hate." (They are echoed by the International Socialist Organization, which claims that if the South Carolina politicians don't remove it, then it means they don't care about black lives.)



WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at 13 December 2014 "Millions March NYC" demonstration against racist police killings.

It is evident that having the flag of slavery so prominently displayed is bad for business. This is a state that is actively courting more corporations to invest so they can expand their open shop empire. So it doesn't look good for doing business if they send out on their letterheads logos of homage to slaveholders.

At any rate the Confederate flag is more than a "symbol of hate": it is a call to arms for racist terror everywhere.

Now Obama and his administration can piously intone (croak) how the flag should be removed—backed up by his aspirant presidential successor, Hillary Clinton. In 2008, when Obama first ran for president, he spoke in South Carolina to celebrate his victory in the state's primary. The *New York Times* commented:

> "The voting took place at the conclusion of a weeklong campaign, where issues were interwoven with discussions of race. A poignant reminder of South Carolina's historic racial divide, the Confederate flag, swayed in the cool breeze on Saturday only a few yards from where supporters waved placards for Mr. Obama, who if elected would become the nation's first black president."
>
> —"Obama Carries South Carolina by Wide Margin," 27 January 2008

His speech is worth reading because at the time Obama bragged about how a former prominent supporter of arch-segregationist Strom Thurmond was then campaigning for him in South Carolina. That is why I began by saying the murder of the nine is one of the bloody signatures of the Obama years. Oppressed black people were further beaten down and chained under his presidency. Yes. Beaten down by a "brother."

It took a bloody civil war in which over 200,000 black soldiers and sailors, arms in hand, played a critical role in smashing the slavocracy and black chattel slavery. They provided a powerful answer to today's advocates of gun control for the oppressed.

P.S. *WV* 572 (26 March 1993) has a good article, "Down With the Confederate Flag and Monuments to Slavery!" ■

Charleston...

(continued from page 1)

and other fascist killers never have any problem procuring their weapons. On the contrary, the racist murderers were often assisted in their bloody work by FBI agents, such as in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing.

It took a bloody Civil War, the Second American Revolution, to smash the chains of black chattel slavery. Two hundred thousand black troops, guns in hand, played a decisive role in crushing the Confederacy. But the promise of black freedom was betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie, which allied with the Southern propertied classes against the aspirations of the black freedmen. It will take a third American Revolution—a proletarian socialist revolution that breaks the chains of capitalist wage slavery—to finish the Civil War.

Facebook (inset), Feidin Santana

North Charleston, April 4: Walter Scott (inset) moments before his cold-blooded execution by killer cop.

"The Cradle of Secession"

The port of Charleston was the main entry point for black African slaves brought into the U.S. It was also in Charleston Harbor that the opening shots of the Civil War were fired against the Union garrison at Fort Sumter. Reverence for the heritage of slavery is still officially sanctioned in Charleston. A giant statue of John C. Calhoun, the infamous 19th-century apostle of slavery and white supremacy, looms less than a block from the Emanuel AME Church, which is located on the main thoroughfare—Calhoun Street. A June 23 article by Jon Schwarz on *The Intercept* website ("Five More Things South Carolina Can Do After Taking Down the Confederate Flag") quoted the memoir of Charleston native and activist Mamie Garvin Fields: "Blacks took that statue personally. As you passed by, here was Calhoun looking you in the face and telling you, 'N----r, you may not be a slave, but I am back to see you stay in your place'."

The Confederate battle flag still flies at the South Carolina state capitol in Columbia. At the time of her election, Nikki Haley, the virulently labor-hating Republican governor, defended the flag of slavery as a "tradition that people feel proud of." But with pictures of Roof displaying the flag flashed around the world, Governor Haley and other right-wing Republicans have joined a chorus calling for the Confederate flag to be removed from statehouses and other official displays across the South. This is pure hypocrisy aimed at trying to quell outrage over the church murders, which were carried out under the banner of the Confederacy.

The capitalist politicians might be whistling a different tune but it still is Dixie. Haley refused appeals from the family of the murdered Emanuel AME Church pastor, the Reverend Clementa Pinckney (who was a State Senator and a prominent opponent of the Confederate flag), to take down the banner while his body lay in state at the capitol. In a final racist humiliation, the horse-drawn carriage transporting Pinckney's coffin was forced to pass through the capitol grounds as the Confederate battle flag flew overhead.

While Haley and the South Carolina legislature talk about removing the flag some day, Bree Newsome, a 30-year-old black activist decided action could not wait. She heroically scaled the 30-foot pole on June 27 and pulled the flag down. Newsome, along with James Ian Tyson, who assisted her, was arrested, and the pair now face up to three years in prison while the Confederate flag was immediately put back up. We demand that all charges against Newsome and Tyson be dropped. Down with the flag of slavery!

There has been a racist backlash against calls to get rid of the racist flag. Charleston longshoremen told *Workers Vanguard* that a caravan of cars and trucks drove through North Charleston with Confederate flags flying. The race terrorists of the KKK have announced a rally at the Columbia statehouse on July 18. That provocation ought to be stopped by a mass mobilization centered on the power of the labor movement from the Charleston area and supporters nationally, acting in defense of black people and in their own self-defense.

Organized labor, especially the powerful Charleston International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, a bastion of labor/black power in the open shop South, was prominent in January 2000 when tens of thousands of people rallied in Columbia to demand that the Confederate flag be removed from atop the capitol. The reality of the racist terror which that flag stands for is all too well known to members of Local 1422. Close relatives of Local 1422 members were among those slain in Emanuel AME Church; other longshoremen's relatives, including Walter Scott, Denzel Curnell and Asberry Wylder, have died at the hands of trigger-happy Charleston-area cops.

Local 1422 members themselves have been viciously attacked by forces of the racist capitalist state. Only days after the January 2000 protest against the Confederate flag, club-wielding cops brutally assaulted longshoremen who were picketing to defend their jobs against the use of non-union labor, arrested a number of workers and prosecuted five of them. The potential of Local 1422 to shut down the Port of Charleston, combined with an impressive campaign of solidarity from waterfront unions internationally, backed down the union-busters, and the Charleston Five were saved from the threat of years in prison.

There have been some recent protests in Columbia against the flag, including one on July 4 of some 1,500 people. However, despite the living links between the labor movement and the black community, there has been no significant labor mobilization to protest the church massacre and no sign of labor's power being mobilized to stop the announced Klan rally. To date, the only statement by the South Carolina AFL-CIO encouraged "all AFL-CIO members to say a prayer." This appeal to kneel down in the face of racist terror is an expression of the prostration of trade-union misleaders in the face of the one-sided class war that has ravaged the unions across the country and furthered the increasingly vicious oppression of black people, immigrants and the poor.

Honor Denmark Vesey!

The Emanuel AME Church was deliberately chosen as the site for Roof's murderous rampage. It is the oldest black congregation in the South, established in 1816. Among its founders was Denmark Vesey, a skilled carpenter and former slave from the Caribbean who was deeply impressed by the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804—the largest and most successful slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere. In 1822, Vesey, along with 34 others, was hanged for planning a widespread slave revolt, and the church building was burned to the ground, in accordance with the laws of the slave South. A monument to Vesey was unveiled in February 2014 after 18 years of obstruction by apologists for the slavocracy. But the monument is tucked away out of sight in Hampton Park. It deserves pride of place in the center of town—the monument to the racist pig Calhoun should be knocked down to make room for it!

The heritage of militant black resistance expressed by the example of Denmark Vesey is the opposite of the black preachers and political leaders of today. Following the liberal-pacifist tradition of Martin Luther King Jr., what passes for black leadership today consists of keeping oppressed black people politically tied to the Democrats and docile before the forces of racist reaction. These leaders' role is to keep a lid on the righteous anger of black workers and youth who are fed up with daily racist cop terror, unemployment and misery.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Black slavery was smashed through the Civil War; legal Jim Crow segregation was overturned through the civil rights struggles. Yet racial oppression remains a central pillar of U.S. capitalist class rule, with the bulk of the black population forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. The slogan "Black Lives Matter" has become a rallying cry for young protesters against racist terror. In the eyes of the capitalist ruling class, black lives don't matter a damn. Schools are as segregated as ever, and for black youth they are often little more than holding pens along a path into the system of mass incarceration which today ensnares fully one in three young black men. Public housing is either rotting away or has been demolished to make way for "gentrification" and other projects that line the pockets of construction magnates and property developers.

What jobs are available are more often than not temporary, part-time and pay only poverty wages. South Carolina's rock-bottom wages and lack of unions have spurred manufacturers like Boeing, BMW and Volvo to set up shop there (as others have across the South) in search of maximum profits. Union manufacturing jobs have been destroyed in the North as companies moved to the open shop South, and now the South's anti-union "right-to-work" model has spread north to former bastions of union power like Michigan and Wisconsin. Through all of this, workers' pay, benefits and conditions have been driven down while capitalists' profits have skyrocketed. Black workers, always the last hired and first fired, have been hit hardest in the war against labor.

Library of Congress

Heroic Massachusetts 54th Regiment charging Fort Wagner at mouth of Charleston Harbor during Civil War, July 1863. Black troops were key to Union victory that smashed chattel slavery.

Black rights and labor rights have always either gone forward together or fallen back separately. This fact is nowhere more sharply seen than in the open shop South. The last campaign by the labor tops to organize the South was the grotesquely named "Operation Dixie" following World War II. It was quickly shipwrecked on the

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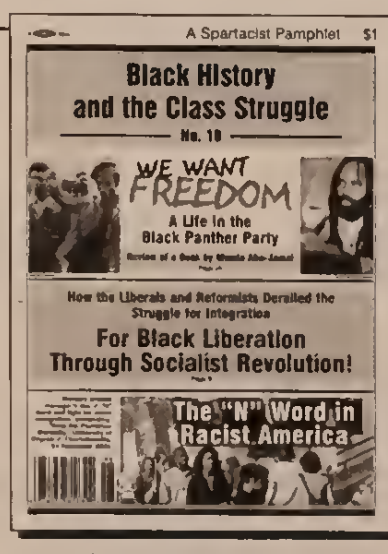

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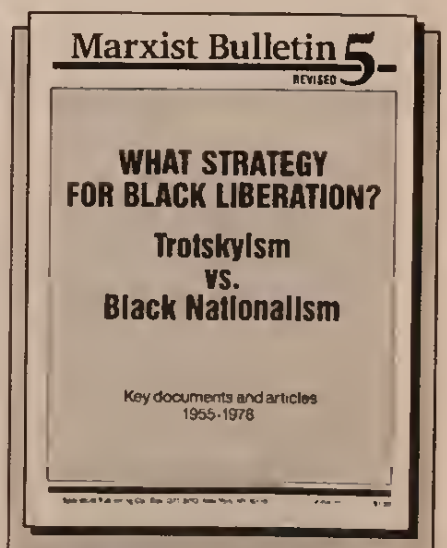

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Charleston...

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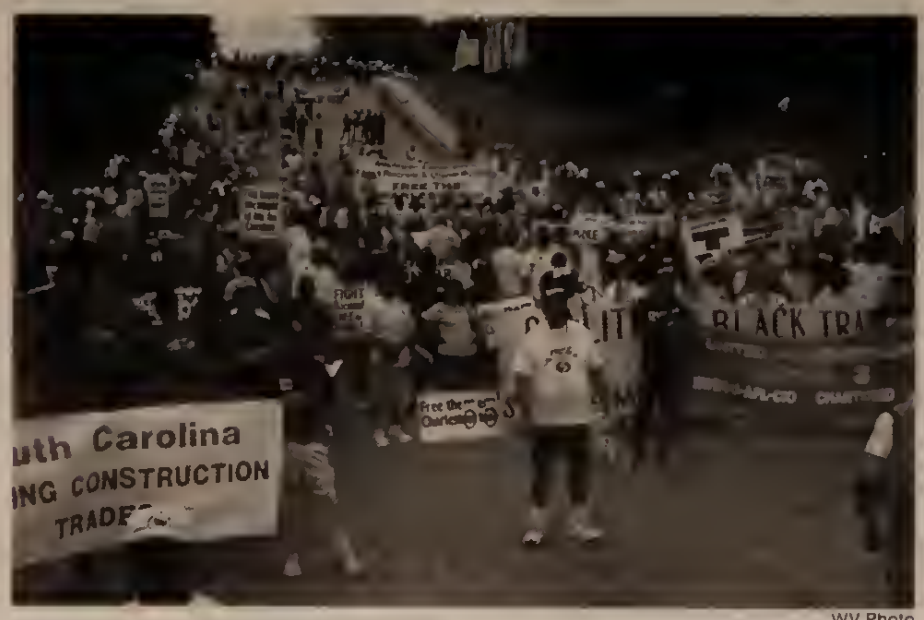
rocks of Cold War red purges, racism and the union bureaucrats' ties to the Democratic Party, which rendered them incapable of waging a fight against the white, Dixiecrat power structure.

Over recent decades, the trade-union misleaders' class-collaborationism, including reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party, has led to one defeat after another. It is necessary to forge a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions. Such a leadership would not only fight to organize the unorganized, including in the South, but also seek to mobilize the power of the working class in the fight against racial oppression. Building that new union leadership requires political independence from the Democrats and all other parties of the capitalist class enemy.

The only path to black liberation is through uprooting the basis of black oppression—the whole capitalist system of exploitation and racial oppression. To bring about genuine equality for black people requires the destruction of the existing class relations and the conquest of state power by the multiracial working class. It is the industrial proletariat, with its heavy concentration of black workers providing a link to the anger of the ghettos, which has the social power to end the rule of racist capitalism through socialist revolution. The crucial task is to build the revolutionary workers party that can lead the proletariat to victory. In recognition of the intimate links between racist oppression and all-sided reaction throughout this country's history, that party will emblazon on its banners: *Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!* ■



WV Photo

9 June 2001: Trade unionists from around the country rally in Columbia, South Carolina, to demand freedom for the Charleston Five, ILA Local 1422 longshoremen victimized for defending their jobs.

L.A....

(continued from page 3)

But even the reactionary Gompers said that workers should demand "more."

The minimum-wage campaign is itself minimal. Refusing to take the fight to the employers in the workplace, the union officialdom is trying to pressure the Democratic Party to "Fight for 15" in the legislative arena. Maria Elena Durazo, Hicks's predecessor as head of the county Federation of Labor, indicated as much. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (13 January 2014), she noted that "most owners have opposed union organizers so adamantly that the only way to make progress was through a broader 'living wage' law." Opposition by the bosses to union organizing is always adamant. Any significant gains will be won not by relying on the Democrats, who no less than the Republicans represent the interests of the capitalist exploiters, but by hard-fought class struggle, particularly at unionized workplaces in industry and along the cargo chain supplying businesses.

The employers want the unions out, period. Thus, the *Los Angeles Times* and other bourgeois media have railed against the unions over the L.A. opt-out plan, echoing a 2014 U.S. Chamber of Commerce report that condemned such exemptions for encouraging "unionization by making a labor union the potential 'low-cost' alternative to new wage mandates." But far from facilitating organizing the unorganized, the more the bureaucrats accommodate the profit-hungry bosses by selling substandard contracts, the less the appeal of the unions to many workers. Nonetheless, despite their present leaderships' bowing down before the class enemy, the unions are still the only elementary defense organizations of the working class against unbridled exploitation, offering protections that workers would not otherwise have. Notably, Fight for 15 protests have attracted combative workers who want both a wage hike *and* a union.

Pressure Politics vs. Class Struggle

We are for an increase in the minimum wage, as we are for any benefit that improves the conditions of the exploited and oppressed. But $15 an hour is not the "living wage" its proponents make it out to be, especially in a city as expensive as Los Angeles. It will hardly end the misery that afflicts millions in the L.A. area, notorious for the vast gulf between rich and poor and its huge concentration of homeless people. Workers affected by the new minimum wage—83 percent of whom are black, Hispanic or Asian—currently earn a median annual income of $16,000. Now they are slated to earn almost double that amount in five years, which will somewhat ease their extreme poverty. But by the admission of the labor tops, these workers will still require public assistance to barely make ends meet.

For much of the reformist left, a $15 minimum has become a maximum program. Pursuing liberal community organizing and petition campaigns, groups like Socialist Alternative (SAlt), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Workers World Party (WWP) tail the union bureaucracy's strategy of pressuring the Democrats to toss a few extra crumbs to the workers and oppressed. Such activity is premised on the myth that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of working people. In fact, the only way to meet the felt needs of the working masses is to overturn capitalism through socialist revolution.

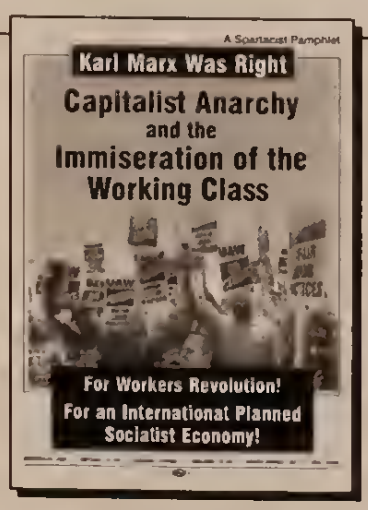
SAlt's Kshama Sawant made $15 an hour a centerpiece of her successful bid for Seattle City Council in 2013, but that didn't stop her from engineering an alternate ballot initiative that included an opt-out clause exempting HERE hotel workers from a higher minimum wage. In the end, the Seattle $15 ordinance, which contains a variety of loopholes, ended up passing without a union exemption. But now SAlt's Philip Locker, political director of Sawant's re-election campaign, tries to weasel around her scandalous support for the earlier measure by claiming that "15 Now" (SAlt's version of Fight for 15) is "extremely skeptical of collective bargaining opt-outs." He then adds that such opt-outs could be of benefit and that in the case of L.A., the issue "should be decided by the workers and union activists" (aljazeera.com, 29 May).

The PSL also waxes ecstatic about the L.A. City Council's vote for a wage hike while alibiing the AFL-CIO's union exemption scheme. These opportunists sound every bit like garden-variety bureaucrats, upholding the framework of zero-sum contract haggling: "The AFL-CIO argues for this exemption because they know that workers in some circumstances could decide at a bargaining table to demand and get a benefit that meant more to the workers in exchange for having a wage slightly below the minimum" (*Liberation*, 5 June). PSL does comment, in staggering understatement: "The exemption in this case is not a powerful step to greater power"!

For its part, the WWP-supported Los Angeles Workers Assembly correctly points out that Hicks's scheme would "discourage workers from wanting to join unions" and encourage "businesses to create company unions" to pay their workers a sub-minimum wage (workers.org, 1 June). But what WWP has to offer is more of the same: herding workers and the oppressed to the ballot box. The entire strategy of the Workers Assembly has consisted of putting forward a separate ballot initiative that would give both union and non-union workers a $15 wage that would take effect immediately if approved by voters.

Let's get real: Wages, benefits and working conditions are ultimately determined by class struggle. Based on their potential social power to bring the capitalist production system to a halt, workers can beat back the bourgeoisie's unrelenting attacks of the last few decades, restore the ground they have lost and revive the unions. But as long as the labor movement remains saddled with misleaders who are bound hand and foot to the dictates of capitalist profitability—including by squandering union dues to elect Democratic politicians—the working class will continue to take it on the chin in this one-sided class war.

It is in the crucible of heightened class conflict that a new workers leadership in the unions can be forged. This is not simply a question of militancy in defense of the existing unions. If the workers are to consistently struggle not only in their own interests but in the interests of all the oppressed, there must be a hard political fight to break labor's ties to the Democratic Party and oust the present sellouts atop the unions. A new, class-struggle union leadership will not only seek to win battles on the picket lines but also be uncompromisingly dedicated to the liberation of humanity from the exploitation, all-sided misery and war that are inherent to a system based on production for profit rather than human need. Striving to forge such a leadership is an integral part of the fight for a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than doing away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery. ■



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Immigration...

(continued from page 12)

The 2011 bombing of Libya by the U.S., Britain and France led to the toppling of the bonapartist Qaddafi government and a state of utter collapse and anarchy. With various military strongmen, imperialist puppets, Islamist reactionaries and tribal forces fighting each other, the unguarded Libyan coast became a destination for many of those from Asia, Africa and the Near East seeking to gain entry into Europe. While the "people smugglers" who extort thousands of pounds to place people on rickety boats are parasites, the big-time criminals are the imperialist rulers. Those people who do manage to make it into Europe are often thrown into brutal detention centres, like Britain's Yarl's Wood, whose inmates have protested against being treated "like animals or less than animals." Such are the normal workings of the global capitalist system.

We say: Those who make it here should have the right to stay here—Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! Shut down the detention camps! All imperialist military forces out of Africa and the Near East!

The Apostles of "Humanitarian" Imperialism

Various groups on the reformist left are promoting fatuous illusions that the rapacious imperialists who are responsible for what has been labelled a "humanitarian catastrophe" will "do something" to help their victims. ControCorrente, the Italian group affiliated to the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), represented in Britain by the Socialist Party [and in the U.S. by Socialist Alternative], demands that "an international maritime assistance plan must be re-established in international waters and, if necessary, in Libyan national waters. Assistance must be guaranteed to every human being" (socialistworld.net, 27 April).

The CWI holds up as a model of "success" the Italian government's Mare Nostrum programme, describing it as a "military and humanitarian mission whose principal objective was maritime assistance and the rescue of migrants." In fact, the declared objective of the now defunct Mare Nostrum search-and-rescue programme was to provide a "deterrent effect" against immigration. And the handfuls that "humanitarian" Italian imperialism does rescue are liable to be thrown into overcrowded camps—as were the 27 people who survived the mass drowning in April.

The British Workers Power group is a typical example of reformist cheerleading for "human rights" imperialism. Lecturing Cameron & Co. that the "highest priority should surely be placed on saving the lives of people driven to desperate measures by consequences beyond their control," Workers Power demands: "We need to open the borders of the EU to all who seek asylum or work within it." They continue: "We need to tear down the walls and transform Fortress Europe into Refuge Europe" (www.workerspower.co.uk, 22 April). Who is "we," one asks—perhaps that Labour government that Workers Power urged people to elect in May, to no avail?

The Workers Power statement acknowledges that the exploitation and wars carried out by the imperialists "are the underlying causes of the humanitarian disaster." What they do not acknowledge, not surprisingly, is their own role. Workers Power, among others on the left including the Socialist Workers Party, helped prepare the ideological ground for the imperialist bombing of Libya by hailing the anti-Qaddafi "revolutionaries" who would later act as spotters for the British and French bombers. Even after the country was overrun by reactionary tribal leaders and Islamic fundamentalists Workers Power continued to claim that these imperialist-backed "rebels" provided an opening for "a struggle for consistent democracy and internationalism" (fifthinternational.org, 22 August 2011).

The call to "open the borders" is both

utopian and reactionary. To call on the capitalists to open their borders is to call on them to eliminate the capitalist system. The modern nation-state (or multinational state dominated by one nation) arose as a vehicle for the development of capitalism and will remain the foundation of capitalism until the whole system is overthrown through a series of workers revolutions. Every capitalist corporation, no matter how far flung its international operations, is ultimately reliant on the armed forces of its home country. No capitalist ruling class will voluntarily relinquish control over its territory.

For revolutionary Marxists, it is axiomatic that the capitalist nation-state, together with private ownership of the means of production, are fetters on the further development of the forces of production, which are social and international in character. Only with the advent of a global, classless communist society and the withering away of the state will there be no borders. To argue otherwise is to deny the iron necessity of socialist revolution for the further advance of humanity and serves only to fuel illusions in the reformability of a potentially "humane" capitalist system.

If promoted as a general principle, the demand for open borders under capitalism is reactionary. As the history of Zionist Israel amply demonstrates, unlimited mass immigration is a threat to the right of national self-determination. The major powers have the means to throttle the flow of refugees and immigrants into their countries when they need to; not so smaller and weaker peoples. While the imperialist states (at the behest of the Zionists) closed *their* borders to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and to the survivors of the death camps, they compelled hundreds of thousands of European Jews to go to Palestine, where they ended up displacing and expelling much of the Arab population.

As the entire history of the British empire shows, insofar as a great power can force a weaker, economically backward state to open its borders, this allows for increased penetration by imperialist capital, effectively eliminating any degree of national sovereignty of the weaker country. The EU capitalist club is committed to the free movement of capital. Immigrant workers from poorer EU states are used as a pool of low-wage labour, and the capitalists seek to manipulate immigration to suit the needs of the labour market in their own countries. In 2004, when the EU expanded into Eastern Europe, citizens of new member states were given the right to work in Britain to fill gaps in the labour market; today Cameron is intent on gutting the legal rights of those immigrants, causing friction with Germany and other EU countries, not least Poland. Meanwhile Italy, France and Britain are at each other's throats, and are reinforcing their borders with each other, while deploying police to attack immigrants trying to cross the frontiers.

Originating as an economic adjunct to the U.S.-dominated anti-Soviet NATO alliance, the EU has always been a mechanism for the capitalist rulers to maximise the rate of exploitation of the working class of the region. The EU is an inherently unstable bloc aimed at improving the competitive edge of its dominant members, chiefly Germany, vis-à-vis their imperialist rivals, centrally Japan and the U.S. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty set the framework for the EU of today. It laid down the conditions for joining the single currency. Member states signed up, agreeing to limits on their budget deficits in exchange for cheaper loans, larger inflows of capital and freer trade within Europe. The euro is an instrument for economic domination, chiefly by Germany, over the poorer EU states. Moreover, as the current EU crisis shows, a single currency shared by different countries is unviable in the long term.

At bottom, the call to "transform Fortress Europe into Refuge Europe" reveals Workers Power's faith that this imperialist-dominated conglomerate can be turned into a progressive "social Europe," as propagated by social-democratic leftists and trade-union bureaucrats. In explaining why they refused to call for a no vote in the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, these reformists argued that it could be "a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won these gains, or where it has lost them," and that "to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht" (LRCI Resolution, *Workers Power* No. 156, June 1992).

The notion that the European capitalists would help "arm" those whom they exploit to fight more effectively to ameliorate the terms of their exploitation truly requires a religious leap of faith! The International Communist League has opposed the EU since its inception, from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism. To see how our sharp opposition to the EU and the single currency has been vindicated, one need only look at the economic devastation visited upon Greece, or at the fate of the poorer countries of Eastern Europe, which have been turned into vast reservoirs of exploitation by (mainly) German and French capital.

With most of the liberal and reformist left peddling illusions in this reactionary imperialist alliance, the main beneficiaries of growing opposition to the EU have been ultrareactionary to outright fascist parties, from UKIP in Britain and Italy's Northern League to the National Front in France and Greece's Golden Dawn. These racist forces have aggressively tried to scapegoat immigrants for the recurrent economic crises that are endemic to the capitalist mode of production.

For International Socialist Revolutions!

If nothing else, the current crisis in the EU exposes the myth that Europe can be peacefully integrated under capitalism. In his 1916 pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, leader of the Bolshevik Revolution V.I. Lenin ridiculed a version of the same argument then proffered by Karl Kautsky, describing it as Kautsky's "silly little fable about 'peaceful' ultra-imperialism." As Lenin explained, imperialism represents the final stage of capitalism, when the world has already been divided up by the major powers and the export of capital predominates over the export of goods. Imperialism is marked by huge financial monopolies extending their grip over the world economy and the subjugation of weaker peoples while the stronger powers fight each other for control of markets and resources. The system itself necessarily leads to wars of neocolonial aggrandisement and, ultimately, interimperialist wars. Imperialist domination prevents any substantial economic growth of the countries of belated capitalist development, miring most of them in destitution.

In the semicolonial countries, whose rulers are tied by a thousand threads to the dominant world powers, the only way to overthrow the imperialist yoke is the seizure of power by the proletariat leading the oppressed masses. This task is inseparably linked to the need for proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, which will open the road to the development of socialism. In contrast to the liberal plea for "open borders," which reduces workers in the semicolonial world to passive victims, we fight for the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. Within this internationalist perspective, immigrant workers have a central role to play, by acting as a human bridge to link the European proletariat to their class brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and the Near East.

Mass migration is an integral feature of imperialist capitalism. British capitalism has long exploited immigrant labour, from the time of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution when it drew in masses of Irish immigrants, to the post-World War II period when British employers actively recruited labour from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent. As we wrote in the ICL Declaration of Principles (1998):

> "Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction."

To be sure, the imperialists are not now actively encouraging a mass influx of downtrodden and impoverished masses of semicolonial people. Yet those who do manage to get into EU countries—often as asylum-seekers, as that is the common legal avenue of admission for many—serve precisely the purpose outlined above. With the aid of the trade-union bureaucracy, the capitalists constantly seek to set the most backward layers of the indigenous working class against immigrants, threatening to replace native-born workers with lower-paid foreign workers. In this way, the bourgeoisie seeks to depress wage levels for the working class as a whole. As a central component of the proletariat of Europe, immigrant and minority workers are bound to play a key role in the fight for socialist revolution.

What is needed is joint struggle by all workers against the wage-slashing, union-bashing capitalists: to fight for the unionization of all immigrant workers, who are often compelled to work for non-union contractors, and for equal pay for equal work; to fight to divide all existing jobs amongst all the available workforce, with no reduction in pay but with a significant reduction in working hours. Against protectionist, anti-immigrant chauvinism, workers must be won to the understanding that they share a common class interest with the workers of all countries and all nationalities against the capitalist class enemy.

The international character of the working class gives it potentially enormous superiority over the bourgeoisie, whose system of production for profit works by anarchistic methods that fuel national conflicts and constantly create social inequality and economic crisis. To realise its revolutionary potential, the proletariat needs an international party to unite the class across national and other divisions and to co-ordinate the interdependent struggles of workers of every country. It is for this purpose that the ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

Following the example of the Bolshevik party that led the Russian Revolution in 1917, we aim to act, in the words of Lenin, as a "*tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression" and "to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat" (*What Is To Be Done?* [1902]).

Our programme is for proletarian revolutions to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and establish a Socialist United States of Europe. The economic unification of Europe under workers rule has been an urgent need for more than a century. Together with proletarian revolutions in the U.S. and Japan and in the more backward countries that today suffer imperialist subjugation, the creation of a socialist Europe would lead to a vast expansion of the productive forces in an international planned economy. Workers governments in the advanced countries would devote enormous resources to the development of Asia, Africa and Latin America, helping pave the way to an egalitarian world order in which people will choose to move around the world for pleasure and enlightenment, not out of fear of physical and economic insecurity. ■

Xinhua

WV Photo

Above: NATO bombing raid on 7 June 2011 against Libya's capital, Tripoli. Left: Spartacist banner at 9 April 2011 antiwar demonstration in New York City. Imperialist devastation of Libya and throughout Near East swelled flow of refugees.

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Russia...

(continued from page 2)

War, NATO is discussing strengthening its nuclear deterrent. U.S. imperialism has also sponsored color "revolutions" to install pro-Washington regimes in several former republics of the USSR. The U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine last year, which installed a fascist-infested and virulently anti-Russian regime, is a case in point.

Our reader asks whether we should call for soldiers of all the belligerents in Ukraine today to "turn the guns around" against their own capitalist rulers; that is, should we have a position of revolutionary defeatism? Such was Lenin's position in World War I, which was an interimperialist war fought over the redivision of the world among imperialist powers. In contrast, the current conflict in Ukraine, the direct result of U.S. imperialist machinations, is a civil war. Militants in the eastern part of the country, which is ethnically mixed but predominantly Russian-speaking, rose up because the ultranationalist Ukrainian regime was trampling on their national rights. The Kiev regime responded by mobilizing its army and neo-Nazi volunteer battalions—bombing cities, killing hundreds of civilians and destroying hospitals and industrial plants. It should be noted that while the insurgents in East Ukraine are backed by Russia, Moscow has shown no interest in annexing eastern Ukraine. Contrary to repeated claims by Kiev and its imperialist patrons that the Russian army is invading, Putin has clearly avoided outright war with the Kiev regime.

Revolutionary Marxists have a side in this conflict: the interest of the working class—in Ukraine, Russia and internationally—lies in defense of the population of eastern Ukraine and its right to self-rule. The fact that we side militarily with the "pro-Russian" forces in eastern Ukraine by no means implies political support to the nationalist rebel leaders or to the Putin regime. Our defense of eastern Ukraine's population is guided by the approach of Lenin, who underlined that the recognition of the right of self-determination is essential to combating national antagonisms and creating conditions where working people of different nations are able to see that the real enemy is their "own" capitalist ruling class, not each other. ■

Crime...

(continued from page 2)

the working class establishes itself in power. We noted: "The determination not to base the penal code of a workers state on retribution found its fullest expression in the 1919 party program" of the Russian Communist Party (see "Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" *WV* No. 1070, 12 June). That section of the program ended with the vision "that the penal system shall ultimately be transformed into a system of measures of an educative character."

The goal of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks was a communist world. They recognized that socialism, the lower stage of communism, was not possible without the productive forces being developed internationally, well beyond current levels of productivity, under the rule of the working class. An egalitarian communist society will provide what people need in exchange for whatever contribution they are able to make. Under communism, classes and the state will have withered away. In *The State and Revolution*, written in the midst of the revolutionary events of 1917, Lenin explained:

> "Freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually ***become accustomed*** to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, ***without the special apparatus*** for coercion called the state."

Under workers rule and under communism there may still be a need to separate out certain individuals if they are a danger to themselves or others, but this would be done without stigma or deprivation and with education, medical care, rehabilitation and the goal of reintegration as productive members of society.

Moran/Citizens' Voice

Teacher Lauren Harrington-Cooper, imprisoned for consensual sex with teenage students, in shackles after September 2014 sentencing.

As NB suggests, there will doubtless be a reduction in crime once the capitalist class is out of power. Many activities that the capitalists label as "crimes" in fact have no victims (e.g., drug use, gambling, consensual sexual activity including prostitution) and we call for them to be decriminalized.

The case NB refers to is that of Lauren Harrington-Cooper, a teacher in Pennsylvania. She was sentenced last September to up to 23 months in prison for having a brief sexual relationship with an 18-year-old male student, performing oral sex on a 17-year-old and two counts of "corrupting minors." She was convicted under a Pennsylvania law barring any sexual contact between a teacher and a student regardless of age or consent. Rather than a case of rape, all reports indicate the sexual encounters were consensual. Nevertheless, Harrington-Cooper will be on the sex offender register for *25 years* and barred from teaching.

As NB notes, the SL believes that ***effective consent*** should determine sexual relations. We reject the right of the capitalist class to criminalize consensual sexual activity, dictating who can have sex, where, at what age, or with how many people. This means we oppose "age of consent" laws and special rules against teachers or professors having consensual relationships with their students. Lauren Harrington-Cooper committed no crime; she should be released from prison and have her teaching license reinstated. ■

Montreal...

(continued from page 5)

opposed the Pegida demonstration, even though they pushed their racist "Charter of Values" when they were in power. As for Québec Solidaire [QS], its denunciations of Pegida contrast with its desire to ***ban*** women who wear the full-face veil from receiving public services. Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities constitute a growing part of the working class in the Montreal region. It is in the interest of the workers movement to defend the most vulnerable against racist anti-immigrant attacks. But the union bureaucracy renounces this fundamental task. Apart from an empty declaration against Pegida's provocation issued by the leadership of the CSN's Metropolitan Montreal Central Council (published the same day!), nothing was done to defend the Muslim minority. Down with anti-Muslim racism! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Québec Solidaire and the Fake Marxists

Practically the whole Quebec left looks to QS as an alternative to the PQ. QS is a party with a petty-bourgeois base and no links to the workers movement which proposes only a capitalism "of solidarity, ecology and democracy." QS even agrees with getting back to a balanced budget, only a year later than what the Liberals propose. Since Couillard's election it has multiplied its offers to collaborate with the Liberals to try and put a more "social" face on austerity. In fact QS is really no different than the PQ of the early 1970s. Just as nationalist, it is an obstacle to the perspective of workers revolution to overthrow capitalism.

Many self-described socialists have liquidated into QS including Alternative Socialiste (AS, associated with the Committee for a Workers International) and La Riposte [Fighthack] (associated with the International Marxist Tendency). In addition to arguing that QS could be an anti-capitalist alternative, these two organizations betray the ABC of the Marxist conception of the state. AS claims that cops are "workers in uniform" (alternativesocialiste.org, 9 July 2014) and La Riposte says that including the police in the movement against Bill 3 "weakens the government's capacity to use them to repress the coming movements of workers and youth" (marxiste.qc.ca, 29 August 2014). Thus these fake socialists want the workers to believe that the police force—a reservoir of racism, sexism and homophobia—could be on the side of the working class. Or that their "unions"—in reality, organizations of legal gangsters—are part of the labour movement. Nothing could be more dangerous for the working class, because the cops are the first line of defense of the bosses' interests.

In addition to these reformists who nestle inside QS, we have the Maoist Parti Communiste Révolutionnaire (PCR) which counterposes itself to it. Don't be taken in by their red flags! The PCR rejects the ***proletarian*** perspective which is essential to Marxism by upholding "protracted people's war" as "the road to revolution in Canada." As Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky always explained, the working class is central to a revolutionary struggle because it is the only class which has the social power to overthrow the bourgeois order. A perspective based on "people's war" dissolves the workers into "the people" and necessarily leads to class collaboration.

The Revolutionary Student Movement (MER), created under the PCR's auspices, denounces the unions as "a powerful factor in the allegiance of the workers to capitalism" (MER, 5 April). These Maoists wipe out any distinction between the working-class base of the unions and the union bureaucracy. The unions are organs of working-class defense against the capitalist exploiter. They should encompass as many workers as possible to strengthen unity in the economic struggle. The authentic Marxist program is to defend the unions against the bosses and the bourgeois state while fighting to forge a revolutionary leadership.

The workers of Quebec and English Canada need their own party to defend their interests. Such a party will fight for the unity of the working class and act as a tribune of the people, defending immigrants, Native people, women and all the victims of capitalist oppression. This rotting economic system—which produces crises, perpetual wars and, as a byproduct, austerity—must urgently be replaced by a planned economy where production will be run rationally according to the needs of all and not of profit. The International Communist League, whose Canadian section is the Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League, is dedicated to reforging the Fourth International, the party that is needed for the overthrow of capitalism in North America and throughout the planet. ■

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Greece...

(continued from page 12)

from the euro and EU might bring. But exiting from the euro and recovering the barest minimum of sovereignty over its currency is a precondition for the country to begin to recover. In the short term, life will likely be harsh for Greek workers following "Grexit," but in the longer term there will indeed be the possibility of "life after default" as U.S. economist Joseph Stiglitz put it (*Huffington Post*, 30 June). Moreover, the Greek working class would be in a better position to struggle for its *class* interests.

The International Communist League has always insisted that in the long term a common European currency is not viable, something that is being driven home today with the events surrounding Greece. Capitalism is based on nation-states with conflicting interests (making the EU itself inherently unstable), and ordinarily each country has its own currency. When it operates with its own currency—the drachma in the case of Greece—a debtor country can get some relief and regain competitiveness by devaluing the currency. But this is not possible in a currency union like the eurozone.

The example of Argentina (or Iceland) graphically shows that Greece might be much better off if it defaulted on its debts and left the eurozone, reinstating its own currency. After Argentina pegged its peso to the U.S. dollar in 1991, its economy went into a deep recession and the country defaulted in 2001. In response, Argentina stopped pegging its currency to the dollar and the economy recovered. Average wages initially dropped 30 percent, but within a year unemployment fell and wages rose. But for Greece to exercise the option of devaluing its currency, it must first break from the euro, which is under the control of the far more powerful German bourgeoisie. Leaving the eurozone and repudiating the debt will not in itself insulate the Greek proletariat from the world economic downturn and capitalist devastation wrought by the imperialists and the Greek capitalist ruling class. The only answer to that is sweeping away capitalist rule through the seizure of power in Greece and extending proletarian rule internationally.

We were unique on the left in calling for a "no" vote while giving no support to the Syriza government and drawing a clear class line against the pro-Syriza camp. As the TGG leaflet notes, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) called on its supporters to cast an invalid ballot with its own slogans opposing the EU and the Syriza government. The KKE claimed that a "no" vote in the referendum was equivalent to a "yes" vote to Syriza's own austerity measures. The KKE leadership's treacherous "tactic," which objectively bolstered the pro-EU "yes" vote, backfired when large numbers of the KKE's own membership rebelled and voted "no."

Comrades of the TGG, along with comrades from other ICL sections, distributed thousands of leaflets—at rallies called by the KKE and by Syriza, in working-class neighborhoods and on campuses. Our leaflet was very well received by many. However, TGG comrades distributing at the final "no" rally were physically driven out by pro-Syriza Greek nationalists who understood clearly enough that our "no" vote in the referendum was certainly not a "yes" vote for Syriza.

Those KKE members who wish to oppose the EU and fight the Syriza government should consider the lessons of their leadership's attempted sabotage of the "no" vote. The Stalinist politics of the KKE leadership are inherently nationalist and can only lead to a dead end in a situation like the current sharp crisis in Greece, which calls out for an internationalist appeal to workers throughout Europe to unite in struggle against their capitalist rulers. For that reason, the KKE has not been able to offer any road forward for the Greek working class, including in this referendum. The TGG seeks to build a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party—at once revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist—as a section of the reforged Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

* * *

In the Referendum We Say: Vote NO! Down With the EU!

No Support to the Syriza Government!

The Trotskyist Group of Greece calls for a NO vote in the July 5 referendum. A resounding "no" vote would be an important blow against the imperialist-dominated EU and its savage austerity programs. A "yes" vote would be a victory for the imperialist rulers and the Greek bourgeoisie and a terrible defeat for the working people of Greece and throughout Europe. It would be used by the EU to further devastate the conditions of life for millions. A "no" vote would help rally the working people in Greece and throughout Europe against the EU capitalists and their blood-sucking banks. *Down with the EU!*

The International Communist League, of which the TGG is a section, has opposed the EU on principle from its inception. The EU is an unstable consortium, dominated by German imperialism, aimed at driving down the living standards of working people throughout Europe, including in Germany itself and not least in East Europe. The euro is an instrument for economic domination of the major powers over the poorer states. The only way out of the nightmare of recurrent capitalist crises is to unite the workers throughout Europe in struggle to sweep away the imperialist EU through the fight for socialist revolutions here and internationally. *For a Socialist United States of Europe!*

The TGG opposed a vote to Syriza in the January election and stands in irreconcilable opposition to the capitalist Syriza government. The Syriza-led coalition has bent over backward to appease the Troika [the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the IMF], seeking merely to haggle over how much austerity should be implemented, while fostering illusions that the EU can be reformed into a "democratic and social Europe." The Syriza-ANEL [right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks] coalition has whipped up Greek nationalism, which fuels anti-immigrant racism. The reformist ANTARSYA coalition seeks to pressure the capitalist Syriza party to break with the EU and IMF. In contrast, we call upon the working class of Greece to struggle against the Syriza government and the entire capitalist ruling class.

The KKE leadership is asking working people to throw away their vote by casting an invalid ballot with the KKE's own slogans. The KKE's refusal to mobilize for a victory for the "no" vote is in complete contradiction with its stated opposition to the EU. The KKE leaders claim that to vote down the Troika's deal is an implicit vote for Syriza's own rotten austerity package. No! Voting down the Troika's deal is just that: telling the imperialist rulers of the EU to get lost! If the "yes" vote wins, the downfall of the Syriza government will come at the hands of the EU imperialists and their Greek lackeys. This will strengthen the hand of the Troika for even more vicious attacks on the working class and oppressed.

In practice, the KKE's call to cast invalid ballots will reduce the number of people voting "no" and could help the "yes" vote win. Anything but a clear "no" in this referendum is a betrayal of the interests of workers here and internationally. Our opposition to the EU is from the standpoint of revolutionary internationalism, not Greek nationalism. The KKE opposes the EU on a nationalist basis. This is demonstrated by the fact that the KKE leadership posits that socialism can be achieved within the borders of Greece alone, without an international extension of workers revolution.

The imperialist governments are trying to blackmail the Greek people into voting "yes" with the spectre of unspeakable suffering if Greece ends up outside the eurozone/EU. A Greek exit from the EU as a result of militant workers struggle would be a step forward, but not a solution in itself. The situation in Greece is part of a global capitalist economic crisis, which cannot be resolved within the borders of any single country, particularly a small dependent country such as Greece with its low level of industry and resources. The only way forward is a series of socialist revolutions that will expropriate the bourgeoisies, including in the imperialist centers, and establish a global collectivized, planned economy under workers rule.

The TGG stands counterposed to the perspective of the opportunist Greek left, who all dissolve the working class into the "people" and promote Greek nationalism (see our most recent article, "Syriza: Class Enemy of Workers and Oppressed," 22 April 2015 [reprinted in *WV* No. 1068, 15 May]). A concrete example of our party's internationalism is that our German section, the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, calls for the cancellation of Greece's debt in opposition to its own bourgeoisie. Our goal is to build a revolutionary, internationalist workers party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Such a party can be built only as part of a reforged Fourth International, the necessary instrument to lead the working class to power internationally. *For new October Revolutions!* ■

AP

Athens, July 2: Trotskyist Group of Greece supporter hands out Spartacist statement at Syntagma Metro station: "Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!"

AP

July 1: Desperate pensioners scramble to enter a bank in Athens. After EU limited liquidity support to Greek banks, pensioners were only allowed one withdrawal, up to the equivalent of $134 from their retirement checks.

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Down With the Imperialist EU!
Syriza: Class Enemy of Workers, Oppressed
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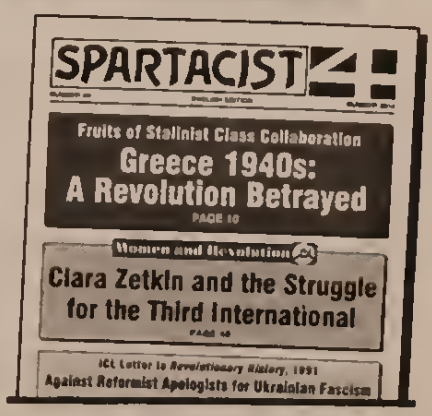

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With the European Union! No Support to Syriza!

Greece Votes No to EU Austerity

JULY 6—Last night, millions of Greek working people celebrated a landslide victory in the country's referendum on a bailout deal with the imperialists of the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Asked whether they would accept yet more grinding austerity as the price for a new "rescue package" (in reality a bailout of Greek and international banks), more than 60 percent of voters responded with a decisive "NO!" With this result, the Greek population has justly delivered a slap in the face to the imperialist leaders of the EU. As our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece wrote in their July 1 statement calling for a "no" vote in the referendum (reprinted below), the victory of a "no" vote would "help rally the working people in Greece and throughout Europe against the EU capitalists and their blood-sucking banks."

Bloomberg

June 29: Thousands demonstrate against EU-imposed austerity at Syntagma Square, Athens, in lead-up to referendum.

The referendum was called by the government coalition led by Syriza, following months of negotiations with its EU/IMF creditors. Syriza called for a "no" vote with the declared intention of using popular rejection of the EU/IMF extortion as a bargaining chip to secure a slightly less onerous austerity package. Syriza is a bourgeois party, supports the EU and is determined that Greece should remain within the euro currency zone. That is why the TGG said "no vote to Syriza!" in the January general election. The Greek workers should use the powerful rejection of EU/IMF austerity in the referendum as a platform for a class-struggle fight against the Syriza government with the aim of canceling the debt and smashing the capitalists' austerity programs.

The proponents of a "yes" vote, along with Germany's Merkel, France's Hollande, Britain's Cameron & Co., sought to panic the Greek population into capitulating to the EU/IMF diktat with the threat that, following a "no" vote, "Grexit" (Greek exit from the eurozone) and a return to its previous national currency, the drachma, would trigger rampant inflation, mass defaults and bankruptcies as well as further deprivation and political unrest. But for working-class Greeks the past several years of economic crisis have been an ongoing catastrophe that has left them with little more to lose. The threats of the Greek capitalists and their imperialist patrons rebounded against them as more people were driven to vote "no" out of fury at being blackmailed.

While the Greek working people have clearly rejected the EU's vicious austerity, polls have consistently shown that around three-quarters of the Greek population are in favor of remaining inside the eurozone and there are still widespread fears about what exit

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Europe: Racist Clampdown on Immigration

The following article originally appeared in Workers Hammer *No. 231 (Summer 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.*

When some 1,200 people drowned in the Mediterranean in a matter of days in April, the horrendous plight of those trying to secure a future for themselves and their children evoked widespread public sympathy across Europe. But for the scoundrels who head the capitalist gov-

WORKERS HAMMER

ernments of the European Union (EU), the mass drownings provided a "humanitarian" pretext for launching military action.

Screaming about "slave-traffickers," Europe's capitalist rulers are seeking to justify a military operation to search and destroy boats, fuel dumps and other facilities used by refugees and immigrants; Britain and France are drafting a resolution for UN backing. At the same time, the EU member states have given the green light to yet another round of tighter immigration controls. From the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast to the Greek-Turkish border, entry points into the EU are already closed off with walls and razor-wire fences. Now warships from Britain, Germany and other EU states are deployed in the Mediterranean. Any such intervention raises the prospect of renewed imperialist military intervention against Libya.

Press Association

Desperate immigrants in Mediterranean, near Libyan coast, June 7. British warship looms on horizon.

Arguably the most piggish of the lot are the rulers of imperialist Britain. Last October the government announced it would cease paying contributions towards the rescue of immigrants at sea. With all the haughtiness due her rank, Baroness Anelay, the Tory Foreign Office minister, declaimed: "We do not support planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. We believe that they create an unintended 'pull factor'" (theguardian.com, 28 October 2014). Now the Tory government has ruled out any idea of taking in a token quota of asylum-seekers. The EU imperialists' message to the desperate masses fleeing imperialist-induced war and starvation in Asia, Africa and the Near East is: Drop dead!

The thousands of immigrants who have died in the attempt to reach the gates of "Fortress Europe" were murdered by the imperialist governments that have militarily devastated their countries, ravaged their economies, robbed them of their livelihoods and then callously left them to die. The collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state in the early 1990s removed a historic obstacle to imperialist free-hooting. The first Iraq war of 1990-91 was quickly followed by U.S. military intervention in Somalia and a host of other imperialist military adventures. Over the past decade, the U.S. and Britain have been involved in wars and/or occupations from Afghanistan and Iraq to Syria and Libya, while France has repeatedly sent troops to protect its economic interests in Ivory Coast, Mali and the Central African Republic.

The existence of the Soviet Union had allowed manoeuvring room for "Third World" capitalist rulers, who garnered economic and military aid by offering themselves as clients to Moscow or Washington. Following capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR the various imperialist powers have increasingly fomented, stoked or manipulated inter-ethnic conflicts and civil wars in order to remove, install or buy off local tyrants and ensure access to valuable natural resources such as oil and diamonds. Meanwhile, countless people are slaughtered, displaced or left to die of man-made famines or scourges like AIDS, which were allowed to rage unchecked.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1072

7 August 2015

Greece: For Workers Struggle Against EU Starvation Diktat

AFP; EPA (inset)

Supporters of PAME, a trade-union formation affiliated with the Greek Communist Party, protest against new austerity measures in Athens, July 22. Inset: Greek prime minister Tsipras with German chancellor Merkel and French president Hollande at Brussels summit, July 12.

Down With the EU! No to Syriza Sellout!

Greek voters decisively rejected the bloodsucking "bailout" of the country pushed by the imperialists of the European Union (EU) and the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a referendum on July 5. Just one week later, the Syriza-led capitalist government trampled on the referendum results and sold out to the imperialists. In exchange for the prospect of 86 billion euros ($96 billion) in new loans, Syriza prime minister Alex Tsipras agreed to punishing austerity measures that are even harsher than those rejected in the referendum.

While final agreement on the bailout has not yet been reached, the Greek government has hiked the regressive VAT (sales taxes) and has pledged to slash pensions and rip up union contracts. Trampling on the remnants of Greece's national sovereignty, the EU is demanding reorganization of the judiciary and government administration. Public assets, including utilities, airports and real estate, are to be placed in a trust fund administered by Greece's imperialist creditors, with the aim of selling them off to raise 50 billion euros to be mainly used to pay off debts and recapitalize the banks.

Since 2010, the EU and the IMF have imposed draconian austerity measures on Greece in exchange for a series of "rescue packages." Those "rescued" have not been the Greek people, but Greek and international banks: 90 percent of the bailout money has gone to debt repayment. The EU is an unstable consortium of capitalist countries that works to increase profits by squeezing the workers throughout Europe, while its dominant members—Germany and, to a lesser extent, France and Britain—use it to further subordinate the weaker, dependent European countries.

Greece is in a profound economic and political crisis triggered by the 2007-08 global financial meltdown, and Greek working people are being bled white to pay for it. Today, over half of Greek youth are unemployed; 300,000 people have no access to electricity; and an estimated 800,000 have been cut off from medical care due to poverty or lack of insurance. What industry did exist in this country of 11 million people has been decimated by the German-dominated EU "single market." Factories across the country stand empty.

The fascists of Golden Dawn and other right-wing forces will seek to take advantage of Syriza's sellout and posture as the populist "saviors" of the nation from the EU. If the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed do not see the working class leading a fight to combat crushing joblessness and poverty, they will be increasingly attracted to the "radical" solutions offered by the fascists. Golden Dawn is known to be supported by large numbers of cops and has historic ties to the military, including the junta that seized power in 1967 and ruled Greece until 1974. Today, two retired army generals are among its Members of the European Parliament. The fascists are a deadly threat to immigrants, gay people and all working-class organizations. Urgently needed are mass, united-front mobilizations centered on the power of the organized proletariat to stop the fascists.

Faced with the ever-worsening economic crisis and the growing menace of fascism, it is vital to unite the toiling masses against the attacks of the imperialists, the Greek bourgeoisie and the Syriza government. To this end, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece initiated a call on July 17 to build workers action committees to fight for the burning needs of working people and their allies (see "ENOUGH!" page 10). It urges Greek workers and the oppressed to repudiate Syriza's sellout agreement and the Greek debt as well as to repudiate the EU and the euro currency. Our perspective is premised on the need to imbue the proletariat with the understanding of its own class interests and potential social power. As the TGG-initiated call states, building workers action committees would be a step toward "a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to

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Young Spartacus

Before It Became All About Marriage...

How New Left Gay Liberationists Were Won to Trotskyism

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Irish Taaffeites Back Call for Cop "Union"

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 231 (Summer 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

On 30 April, a vote took place in Dail Eireann (the Irish parliament) on the "Industrial Relations (Members of An Garda Siochana and the Defence Forces) Bill 2015." The bill was proposed by Labour Party TD (member of parliament) Michael McNamara. It aimed to allow the Garda (Irish police) to join the trade-union

WORKERS HAMMER

movement—something which is effectively prohibited by law—and to grant them the "right to strike." In the upshot, the McNamara proposal was defeated in parliament by a combination of the two governmental parties—the bourgeois Fine Gael and the social-democratic Lahour Party—with the main bourgeois opposition party Fianna Fail.

The McNamara bill did receive the support of 24 deputies—an odd mix of some that are regularly on the receiving end of cop violence and those that would welcome moves towards a police state. The bloc was composed of an assortment of self-styled leftists (including former supporters of the now defunct United Left Alliance), the [Irish nationalist] Republicans of Sinn Fein and a coterie of right-wing elements. The latter included a new party, Renua Ireland, an anti-abortion split from Fine Gael. Joining them all in support of the cops was the TD Paul Murphy of the Socialist Party, Irish affiliate of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) [whose U.S. section is Socialist Alternative].

Demotix

"Workers in uniform" at work: Irish cops (Garda) brutalizing activists at "people's protest" outside parliament in Dublin, September 2014.

The cops in Ireland are generally despised and resented by the working class. For class-conscious workers it is a simple fact of life under capitalism that the police are their enemies. As far back as 1913, when the working class was confronted with murderous cop violence during the Duhlin Lockout, revolutionary syndicalist workers' leader James Connolly called for an armed workers militia. The workers of Dublin, both men and women, responded and the Irish Citizens Army was founded to defend the working class against attacks by the police.

Yet numerous times in the intervening decades, pro-capitalist misleaders of the working class have peddled the pernicious notion that police and prison guards are part of the workers movement, and that their demands for "unionisation" must be supported. This myth is partly a reflection of the low level of class struggle—itself a product of the wilful treachery of the trade-union bureaucracy. Sharp trade-union battles, so desperately needed to fight government austerity on both sides of the Irish Sea, would quickly destroy any idea that the cops can be won over to the side of the trade-union movement.

When it comes to keeping alive the hoary myth that the police are "workers in uniform," the efforts of the CWI and its national sections are unsurpassed. This organisation routinely supports strikes by cops and prison guards. Indeed in Britain the CWI in 2009 grotesquely welcomed the then leader of the Prison Officers Association (POA) into its own ranks. In Ireland it advocates rights for airport security guards. The Socialist Party's touching faith in the capitalist state would be hilarious if it weren't so dangerously stupid. Speaking at Leader's Questions in the Dail on 17 February, Ruth Coppinger, another of the party's TDs, read out a letter from a garda who complained that the government was bringing the police into disrepute by sending them against water charges protesters. Coppinger complained that the Garda and the courts were "being used to defend corporate interests and the establishment." Cops defending the interests of the capitalists? Well fancy that!

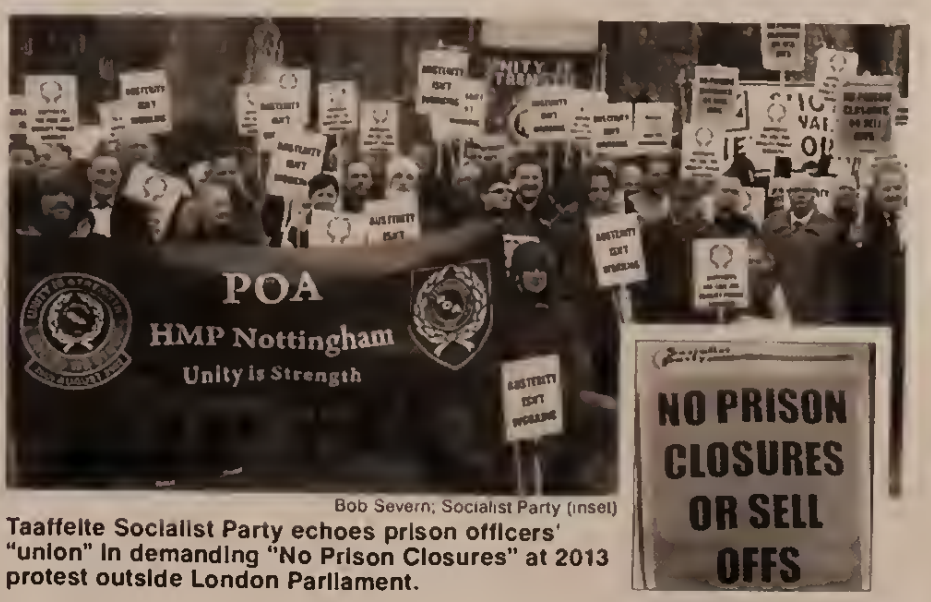
The Socialist Party's call for "a police force that should be answerable to working class people and communities" (socialistparty.ie, 6 December 2014) is classic social-democratic reformism. The cops are not part of the workers movement but its irreconcilable enemy. The police force, prisons and courts constitute the core of the capitalist state, the hosses' apparatus of repression which exists to ensure that the capitalists can go about their business in relative peace, reaping enormous profits off the hacks of the working class. One of the tasks of the International Communist League as Marxist revolutionaries is to instil into the working class the understanding that the capitalist state is not some neutral arbiter between the interests of the different classes but exists to enforce the will of the bosses. The job of the cops includes breaking strikes and terrorising the oppressed. Our call is: Cops and prison guards out of the unions! The same applies to security guards, who are private cops acting as auxiliaries to the bosses and their state.

Police "Strikes": Threat to Workers/Minorities

Within the Garda ranks there exists an ominous organisation—the Garda Representative Association (GRA)—which seeks the very legal changes that the McNamara bill and the Socialist Party support. The GRA has been campaigning for years for the right to strike. We warn that any move for police "unionisation" or the "right to strike" is not a development in the direction of trade-union consciousness. Quite the opposite. Such moves express the bonapartist appetites of the police to break free from the letters of bourgeois democracy and to act as judge, jury and executioner, unhindered by the courts or by parliament and its laws.

While the forms of bourgeois democracy—free elections to a sovereign parliament, etc.—serve to camouflage the reality that capitalist rule is based on armed force, the ability of the cops to operate without the constraints of formal democracy is clearly a heightened danger to all the oppressed. In a country where most cops do not carry guns, the GRA's current campaigns provide a flavour of what a strike by the Garda would demand. Not only do they want more cops and higher salaries, they are running a campaign to have the Uzi submachine gun restored to the armed response units. They have welcomed the provision of pepper spray to the rank and file, but feel it doesn't go far enough and call for all cops to be armed with Taser stun guns. Also, they want better armour protection for their members and the issuance of leg restraints!

A successful police strike, whether for more pay, for weaponry or for more autonomous powers, can only mean enhancing the confidence and the ability of the cops to carry out their task of repression. What do Paul Murphy and his fellow "socialists" think a stronger, better-organised police force would be used for? In Ireland the Garda regularly carry out arrests, harassment and detention of dissident Republicans, as well as brutal violence against the homeless and evictions of tenants from their homes. In 2013 the cops were



Bob Severn; Socialist Party (inset)

Taaffeite Socialist Party echoes prison officers' "union" in demanding "No Prison Closures" at 2013 protest outside London Parliament.

In Memory of Leon Trotsky

TROTSKY

LENIN

Seventy-five years aga, on 20 August 1940, Leon Trotsky was killed by a Stalinist agent in Mexica. Co-leader with V. I. Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revalutian, Tratsky was an intransigent fighter against the Stalinist bureaucracy's betrayal of that revolution, founding the Fourth International in 1938. Today, we in the ICL fight to reforge the Faurth Internatianal, destroyed by liquidatianist forces in 1951-53, as the indispensable prerequisite far the victory af world socialism. We print below excerpts from a statement by the Natianal Committee of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Warkers Party on Trotsky's assassination.

Leon Trotsky, organizer of the Russian Revolution and its true representative, has finally been done to death by Stalin, the betrayer of the Revolution and the mass murderer of the whole heroic generation that made it....

But the great fruit of Trotsky's more than forty years of dauntless work and struggle remains imperishable. For Trotsky, who stands on a historical eminence by the side of Marx and Lenin, worked like them not for a day, but for eternity. The richest products of his genius are preserved in his writings. They constitute both a faultless analysis of the decay of capitalism and a clear program of struggle for the socialist future of humanity.

Armed with these weapons the oppressed of all the world will arise out of the bloody welter of the present society and fight their way to freedom. They have been deprived of the physical presence of Trotsky. But no power on earth can destroy the mighty inheritance he has left behind—the gift of his incomparable genius to the cause of humanity....

Comrade Trotsky was not only the teacher of the vanguard of the proletariat. He was also its organizer. He was the architect of the Fourth International, the new international association of revolutionary workers. It is arising on firm foundations in all countries of the world. The Fourth International will be the greatest monument to the memory of Trotsky. It will be the instrument for the final realization of the aim to which he devoted his entire life—the liberation of all humanity from slavery, exploitation and war.

—"Fight Now as Never Before, Comrades!" *Socialist Appeal*, 24 August 1940

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Reformist Left Plays in Bernie's Sandbox

Oscar Wilde's description of British upper-class fox hunting—"the unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible"—is an apt summation of the spectacle of reformist "socialists" hotly debating whether or not to support Bernie Sanders' campaign for president. Socialist Alternative (SAlt) kicked off that debate more than a year ago. Flush with excitement over the 2013 election of its supporter Kshama Sawant to Seattle's city council, SAlt announced: "There has not been a more propitious time in modern American history to begin to build a pro-working class political force" (socialistalternative.org, 16 April 2014). SAlt then began to churn out articles pleading with Sanders to make a run for president as an independent rather than as a Democrat. Finding this offer one he could easily refuse, Sanders announced his run for the Democratic Party nomination as well as his intention to support whichever candidate the Democrats nominate, presumably Hillary Clinton.

Socialist Alternative hits the bricks for Bernie, who is seeking the Democratic Party nomination for president. Below: Can you spot the "Independent"? Sanders with Democratic Senators, Washington, D.C., 2006.

Reuters

Thus rebuffed, SAlt rallied with Pepe Le Pew-like doggedness to Plan B: its members will work in the Sanders primary campaign while not advocating a vote to him (as a Democrat) in order to pressure him to run in the general election as an independent. Belaboring the obvious, SAlt acknowledged that Sanders' campaign could "be used as a convenient 'left flank' by Clinton to draw in support from union members and activists who are fed up with corporate politics" (socialistalternative.org, 9 May). Wringing its hands, SAlt opines: "It would be tragic if Sanders' campaign ends up playing this role," as if it could be anything other than a vehicle to rope the disaffected back into the Democratic Party fold. Indeed, despite his rare and completely nominal claims to being an "independent socialist," for the past 25 years Sanders has been a member of the Democratic Party congressional caucuses.

In this capacity, the Vermont Senator's record of service to U.S. imperialism has been nearly impeccable. In the 1990s, he supported the NATO war against Serbia instigated by Democratic Party president Bill Clinton as well as the UN starvation sanctions that killed more than 1.5 million Iraqis. Over the years, he has generally backed every U.S. military intervention abroad, including in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2001, Sanders voted in favor of the "Authorization for the Use of Military Force," which launched U.S. imperialism's war and occupation of Afghanistan and later Iraq. More recently, he backed a Senate resolution supporting the 2014 Israeli massacre of Palestinians in Gaza.

On the home front, Sanders enlisted in the "war against crime" (read: black people), supporting Clinton's 1994 "Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act," which vastly expanded the crimes punishable by death at the hands of the federal government, poured 100,000 more cops onto the streets to patrol the inner cities and provided billions more in funding for prisons. It is small wonder that Sanders' response to the explosion of outrage in black Baltimore against racist cop terror was to comment: "Being a cop is a hard job."

With such a background, Sanders has even elicited some criticism from the inveterate opportunists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), who are engaged in a debate with SAlt over the probity of the latter's tactics in supporting the candidate. Arguing that "his record should lead socialists to question" Sanders' purported "independence" is none other than ISO leader Todd Chretien, himself an experienced participant in bourgeois electoralism. In 2006, Chretien ran for the small-time capitalist Green Party's nomination for the U.S. Senate in California. For years, the Green Party has served as a stopover for disgruntled liberals on the road back to the Democratic Party.

All the ISO's current hypocritical lectures on "independence" are designed to mask their own capitulation to the Democrats mediated through the likes of the Greens. Moreover, news of the large crowds Sanders has attracted with his verbiage about "political revolution against the billionaires" exerts the kind of pull that the ISO cannot resist: numbers. Chretien promises that the ISO will not be "stuck on the sidelines":

> "Not at all. The Sanders' campaign gives us an opportunity to debate socialist politics. If Sanders wants to bring movement and union activists into the Democratic Party through its left entrance, we should try to get them back out that door and into the streets. We can engage on political issues with People for Bernie groups and encourage them to take part in activism outside the electoral arena."
> —socialistworker.org, 20 May

In short, the ISO proposes to redirect the energies of campaigners for "Bernie" to putatively more promising tasks—like maybe re-hydrating the desiccated remains of the Occupy movement or some other vehicle designed to pressure the capitalist Democratic Party to "serve the people."

To this end, the ISO trots out Howie Hawkins, a leader of the Green Party who won nearly 5 percent of the vote in his 2014 New York gubernatorial campaign against Democrat Andrew Cuomo. In an article titled "Bernie Sanders Is No Eugene Debs" (socialistworker.org, 26 May), Hawkins argues, "Too many self-proclaimed socialists in the U.S. have abandoned the socialist principle of independent political action." He should know! From the Peace & Freedom Party in the late 1960s to the Greens today, Hawkins is a veteran of capitalist "third parties" whose purpose is to channel social discontent into the ballot box. After some grandiose misuse of longtime Socialist Party leader Debs and also of Karl Marx, Hawkins gets down to business: "From an independent socialist point of view, all the money and time going into Sanders' handoff to Clinton is time and money that could be going into getting Jill Stein's Green Party candidacy on every ballot in the country."

The independence of the working class from all the parties—the Greens included—that represent the interests of the capitalist exploiters is the elementary precondition for struggle against this system of wage slavery. It was well over 150 years ago, following the failed bourgeois revolutions of 1848, that Marx and Engels grasped that any support to or mixing of banners with the parties of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie was anathema to the workers' fight. Against calls for support to the German Democratic Party of the time, Marx argued in his 1850 "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League":

> "It is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power and until the association of the proletarians has progressed sufficiently far—not only in one country but in all the leading countries of the world—that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and at least the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers. Our concern cannot simply be to modify private property, but to abolish it, not to hush up class antagonisms but to abolish classes, not to improve the existing society but to found a new one."

In Defense of Debs

The reformist riders in the third-party clown car at the Democratic Party rodeo invoke the heritage of Eugene V. Debs. Such fondness is not for the Debs who campaigned for the overthrow of the capitalist order by the revolutionary proletariat but rather for the early Socialist Party, which included both fighters for workers revolution and outright racists and apologists for the American imperialist order. SAlt positively salivates: "For all the faults of the Socialist Party in the first few decades of the 20th Century, it would be an excellent development if we had today a similar 'socialist' organization of tens of thousands of people with dozens of elected officials" (socialistalternative.org, 7 July).

James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the American Communist movement and later of American Trotskyism, was part of the left wing of the Socialist Party that exited that organization under the impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution. In his article "The Debs Centennial" (*Fourth International*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Winter 1956), Cannon reviled those who "have discovered new virtues in the old Socialist Party, which polled so many votes in the time of Debs" for doing "an injustice to the memory of Debs." He concluded: "The triumph of the cause he served so magnificently will require a different political instrument—a different kind of party—than the one he supported. The model for that is the party of Lenin."

While the reformists pitch their respective tents in the camp of the parties of the capitalist class enemy, we in the SL struggle for a revolutionary workers party like Lenin's and Trotsky's Bolsheviks that aims for nothing other and nothing less than the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers rule. Such a perspective is dismissed as at best a hopeless utopia by SAlt and the ISO, who preach that one must reach people "where they are at." But the Bolshevik Revolution actually happened. And there were a good number of subsequent proletarian uprisings that failed due to both the lack of a revolutionary party to lead the workers to victory and the treachery of self-proclaimed "socialists" who defended the capitalist order.

The course charted by the ISO and SAlt—a progression of baby steps of reform through building "movements" that will pressure the capitalist state into enacting a decent social order—has never happened anywhere. Not in the 19th century, not in the 20th, nor will it ever. But as the current embodiment of social-democratic opposition to working-class struggle and socialist revolution, the ISO and SAlt have a bridge or two they are trying to sell in the current round of bourgeois elections in America. ■

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involved in a spate of state-sponsored kidnappings of Roma (Gypsy) children. Most recently the Irish state has been targeting the anti-water charges protests. Across Ireland there have been mass protests against the introduction of a regressive charge on domestic water. This tax, borne largely by the poor and by the working class, was dictated by the International Monetary Fund and the EU, and has been implemented by the utterly servile Irish government. In order to get the EU diktat through, the Irish state has resorted to using police violence, the courts and the prison system. Many of the protests have been at the community level and have been met with brutal cop assaults. A number of protesters have been thrown into prison. Many more have been arrested, among them one Paul Murphy TD, the same "socialist" now supporting a call that would give the cops more power!

The Socialist Party's solicitude for the cops is integral to its social-democratic programme of electing a government that will nationalise industry, while leaving the capitalist state intact. As opposed to the CWI's traditions, the revolutionary parties the ICL seeks to build will be guided by Marx's understanding, drawn from the lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871—the first time in history that workers seized power—that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" (*The Civil War in France*, 1871). As regards which class the police represent, we stand with Friedrich Engels who wrote in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845): "Because the English bourgeois finds himself reflected in his law, as he does in his God, the policeman's truncheon which, in a certain measure, is his own club, has for him a wonderfully soothing power. But for the working man quite otherwise!" ■

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated September 4.**

Young Spartacus

Before It Became All About Marriage...

How New Left Gay Liberationists Were Won to Trotskyism

On June 26, young comrades from the International Communist League, gathered in New York City for a "Youth Work-In," heard a presentation on the history of the Red Flag Union (RFU, formerly Lavender & Red Union).

The class, given by our comrade Steve B., drew on his history as an RFU member. He described how the RFU and Spartacist League (SL) fused their organizations and political futures in the late 1970s. The Lavender & Red Union (L&RU) developed out of the New Leftist gay liberation milieu and had as its aim socialist revolution, understanding the need to build a vanguard party that would fight in the interests of all of the oppressed. Simultaneously, it shared the gay milieu's sectoralism—the belief that each oppressed sector of society must fight separately for its own liberation. His talk emphasized how, in the midst of the rapid and tumultuous political developments of the New Left, the RFU was able to develop a deeper understanding of revolutionary politics and be won to Trotskyism, eventually fusing with the Spartacist League in August of 1977.

All of this took place in a period of American radical politics very different from the narrow terrain of the gay rights milieu today, which has embraced the bourgeoisie's "family values" campaign. Over the last two decades, the struggle for gay equality has largely been over legal marriage and the right to serve in the U.S. imperialist military, focusing on "legitimate" acceptance into particularly reactionary institutions. A snapshot of the NYC Gay Pride Parade this year gives a telling picture of the state of gay activism. Coming on the heels of the U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing same-sex marriage nationwide, the 2015 Pride march was sponsored by Wal-Mart among over 50 other corporations. It was kicked off with a gay marriage ceremony officiated by union-busting Democratic governor Cuomo—a far cry from the historic 1969 Stonewall rebellion against commonplace police repression and anti-gay violence. Steve's talk pointed out that even in the 1970s, a wing of the gay liberation movement was turning toward the Democratic Party. Today, the absorption of the gay liberation movement into mainstream politics is by and large complete.

The SL has always stood for the right of gay, lesbian and transgender people to marry (and divorce!), as we support any gain in civil and democratic rights that the working class and oppressed can wrest from the capitalist state. We fight for a society in which people are not forced into the legal straitjacket of marriage to obtain the benefits, rights and privileges this capitalist society grants only to those who abide by the stricture of "one man on one woman, until death." At the same time we also recognize that marriage is a conservatizing institution. Further, the right to marry does not shield LGBT people from continued bigotry and violence in this deeply homophobic society.

Gay oppression flows from the repressive institution of the heterosexual, monogamous family unit—the root of the oppression of women that arose along with the establishment of the "rightful" inheritance of private property. Together with organized religion, the family is a key prop for the ideological regimentation of capitalist society, instilling bourgeois morality and sexual "norms" as well as obedience to authority. Any "deviations" that threaten the maintenance of this crucial institution are considered "sinful"—from same-sex relationships to abortion, to intergenerational sex. Only workers revolution can lay the basis for the replacement of the family through socializing childcare and housework, and thus allowing women full participation in all areas of social and political life. Replacing the family will establish the conditions for the final withering away of anti-gay prejudice and reaction.

The fight against gay oppression is inseparable from the struggle for democratic rights for all of the oppressed. The creation of a genuinely free and equal society, sexually and otherwise, requires the destruction of capitalist class rule and the creation of a communist world. We seek to build a revolutionary vanguard party to lead the working class in a fight for socialist revolution, the seizure of state power on behalf of all the exploited and oppressed. We print Steve's presentation below, edited for publication.

* * *

In August 1977, at a Benedictine monastery in Montecito, California, with sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, the Spartacist League and Red Flag Union fused, following over a year of intense study, debate and joint work. It was the waning days of the New Left, and the SL's insistence on winning left-moving elements on a programmatic basis had paid off once more. At the fusion conference, leading Spartacist League comrade George Foster made the simple and powerful statement that this was a confirmation of Lenin's understanding of the vanguard party as the tribune for all the oppressed.

WV Photo

Red Flag Union conference in Los Angeles, June 1977, featured debate between SL and pseudo-Trotskyists. Two months later, SL and RFU fused. Below: Selection of literature from the period.

The RFU's organizational predecessor, the Lavender and Red Union, had been founded in March 1974 as a "gay liberation-communist" group. The L&RU proclaimed three purposes. First, to support gay liberation struggles from a communist perspective through study groups, film and theater presentations, forums, maintaining a bookstore and conducting work in the gay community. Second, to work to reverse counter-revolutionary trends in the gay community. Third, to refute and struggle against the anti-gay positions taken by many self-described revolutionaries, by providing a Marxist approach to the oppression of gay people. It was faithful to that mission, battling exclusions from Maoist and Third World nationalist events and launching two major campaigns in the gay community in Los Angeles: a boycott of the popular Studio One bar in West Hollywood for its racist and sexist door policy and leading a strike at the gay community and service center in Hollywood.

The L&RU put out 21 issues of its paper, *Come Out Fighting*, over a two-year period, with a subscriber base of over 200. It maintained correspondence with gay leftists in the U.S. and abroad as well as with a number of left groups. There was a dues structure, an office and bookstore and production of leaflets. There were organized demonstrations and picket lines, class series and theoretical tracts (if largely focused on sexual oppression). There was a very healthy internal study regimen which served us well—and even without a full program and with a very muddled world view, the L&RU practiced its own form of democratic centralism. This was one point in terms of party and program that became important acquired knowledge: that disciplined political functioning proceeds from essential programmatic unity.

In a way, the early L&RU was acting like a party formation without the goods. Yet in its three-year existence, it established something of a reputation. A few years ago, a graduate student from Washington University in St. Louis contacted the Prometheus Research Library about the group. I sat down with him for an afternoon. He was doing a dissertation about gay liberation and the left, and told me that all his research kept leading him back to the L&RU as the far left pole of gay liberation.

The fusion with the Spartacist League was a historically unique event, when you look at what was then called the gay liberation movement. The Mattachine Society, formed in Los Angeles in 1950, was largely founded by members and ex-members of the Communist Party, like Harry Hay. Indeed, it could be said that the founding cadre of the modern gay liberation movement was littered with former leftists. I can't tell you how many people I had known in gay liberation who had honed their organizational skills in left groups, the antiwar movement, or women's and civil rights movements. So the L&RU was very distinct: an organized gay group with a trajectory back to a communist organization; seemingly all of the traffic had been in the opposite direction. One of the characteristics that set us apart as revealed in early documents produced by the L&RU was a recognition that the ultimate goal was a socialist revolution and that building a vanguard party to lead the working class to power was a necessity.

New Left Potpourri

As the RFU wrote on the eve of our fusion with the SL: "We did not know we were founded on a political contradiction.... We attempted to reconcile with a hyphen two fundamentally different polit-

ical perspectives: the sectoralist view of the gay liberation milieu and what we imagined to be the communist approach." It took some time to cast away the baggage of gay sectoralism. In looking back, I found it useful to check out Bruce M.'s talk from last year about the Communist Working Collective fusion which preceded our fusion by six years (see "From Maoism to Trotskyism: Recollections of a Participant," *WV* No. 1038, 24 January 2014). Maoism, which had been hegemonic in the New Left of the late '60s, was fractured and reeling in the early '70s due to China's alliance with U.S. imperialism under Nixon.

I remember the proliferation of Maoist study groups and collectives around the U.S. Two members of the RFU had been around the Potomac Socialist Organization in D.C. I had some contact with them and the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee during the summer of 1976 while I was working on a gay rights project organized by the National Lawyers Guild in D.C. Both groups had gay members and were grappling with the reactionary Maoist position, which saw homosexuality as an illness caused by capitalism. I had tried to read Mao that summer, but it inevitably resulted in a very nice nap. The best description I found of this period was in *Women and Revolution* ("On 'Gay Liberation': A Marxist Analysis," *W&R* No. 13, Winter 1976-1977) so I will quote from that:

> "It is precisely the rejection of Marxist materialism which characterized and ultimately destroyed the New Left. Abandoning this foundation, it floundered and splintered into a pack of mutually hostile, self-delimited 'primary oppression' groups. The belief that only the oppressed can understand, and therefore combat, their own oppression led to the creation of exclusionist tendencies—first along racial lines and then along sexual lines, and ultimately, in an absurdly logical extension, to exclusively lesbian organizations, all-male gay groups, Jewish feminists, Jewish lesbian feminists, fat feminists, etc."

These groups took as their mantra: the personal is political. They reflected the program of New Left lifestylism—a belief that a sum total of individual lifestyle choices could effectively transform society. Gay lifestylism, in particular, was the belief that simply by enough individuals being out of the closet, gay oppression could be combated and even done away with.

In preparing for this talk I saw an issue of the L&RU's paper with an apologetic article we wrote addressing a protest by the feminist group the Fat Underground. They complained that we had used a cartoon with a rather corpulent cigar-smoking man representing capitalism. As a comrade said to me: you can't make this stuff up. The idea that every particular group of the oppressed must organize separately against its particular circumstances is what we call sectoralism. If you pair that with a program that there must be organizations to lead each sector in separate struggle, you get polyvanguardism. These programs, by fragmenting potential allies in the struggle against capitalist misery into narrow interest groups, serve to disarm revolutionary struggle rather than quicken it. All the various forms of oppression brought on by capitalism are important to combat. But it is the job of a single revolutionary party, based on the power of the working class, to do so, and to do so in the course of organizing to overturn the entire capitalist system.

Sectoralism and polyvanguardism pervaded the entire left. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) had separate printed programs for blacks, women, gays and Chicanos. The self-proclaimed socialist-feminists of the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) were one of the big losers in our fusion with the SL. They were certain that their pandering to gay sectoralism would be irresistible to us and that we would choose it over the unitary proletarian program represented by the SL. At the time, they were angling to secure the United Secretariat franchise in the U.S. as part of Ernest Mandel's International Majority Tendency (IMT). I believe this required them to break out of Seattle and display some component of organizational stability. Bagging the RFU would have made them a serious contender for the franchise. Their draft statement for an IMT regroupment provided for the right of any oppressed group to form separate caucuses inside their party to promote their rights and resist "any manifestation of racism, sexism or homophobia in the organization." This caved to anti-communist prejudice, reflecting the New Left's distrust of revolutionary organizations.

Running Up Against the Russian Question

My own political history had been in gay liberation on the East Coast. Well before I met the L&RU, I gave a speech of chemically pure sectoralism at the closing session of the Gay Academic Union conference here in NYC in November 1974 where I put forward what was then called the patchwork majority: all the oppressed combining together as some sort of mega-pressure group on the powers that be. There was even a button to wear, representing the various constituencies. It was a very big button. The working class was just another oppressed group. Although I never mentioned the Democratic Party in the speech, it was always the elephant (well, donkey) in the room, especially as the gay movement began to shed its more radical aspects.

I had grown weary of my illusions in the Democrats and wondered what answers Marxism had to offer. At the end of the day, the L&RU wasn't a big leap for me when I met them in the fall of 1976. I was involved in a political fight at the Peoples College of Law (PCL) in Los Angeles. PCL was a microcosm of the left. There were separate caucuses for blacks, Latinos, women, gays, Asian-Americans and workers. There was a very heavy Maoist influence—the Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party had students and/or faculty there. At the end of every class, be it Torts, Crimes or Contracts, we had that very silly Maoist exercise of criticism, self-criticism. There was also a lingering Communist Party presence at PCL, as well as a good number of guilty liberal types and nationalists of every ilk.

Kay Tobin Lahusen

Mattachine Society marches in New York City, 1970.

A group called the Venceremos Brigade had been founded by some members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1969. They would organize hundreds of youth to go to Cuba to help with the sugar cane harvest. Early on there was a crisis about openly gay people being on the trips. We had a gay caucus at PCL with two members who had been on the brigade and surreptitiously had met some Cuban gays at midnight in a cane field (or so the legend goes). This ignited a huge controversy in the Venceremos Brigade and in 1972 they banned openly gay people from the brigades.

In the fall of 1976 there was a proposal before the governing council of PCL to provide space at no cost for a Venceremos Brigade fundraiser at the school. We had a showdown at a governing council meeting that ran into the wee hours of the morning. The gay caucus had asked the L&RU to come and be one of our presenters in the debate. In the debate, we supported the Cuban Revolution, but also made clear the anti-gay attitude of the Castro government and its reflection in the Stalinist and Maoist left in the U.S. And so while we wanted to allow the Brigade to be at our school, we did not want to give them a political endorsement. What was important for me was that in the coming months (and timing is very important in politics), all of us were introduced to the SL's position on the deformed and degenerated workers states. Unlike most gay leftists who had recoiled from Cuba's persecution of gays and abandoned or become indifferent to the defense of Cuba, some of us were able to re-evaluate the political nature of the Castro regime. We decided that we could defend Cuba against U.S. imperialism and internal counterrevolution and still condemn the Stalinist perversion of Bolshevism. We adopted the Trotskyist program that you militarily defend a deformed workers state despite its deformations.

One more short story from PCL. We had in-house childcare that was staffed by students including one gay man, Ted, who was probably the most gentle, caring man I had ever met and was by far the kids' favorite. A Revolutionary Union supporter raised a motion to ban gay men from doing that job. Disgusting. They saw homosexuality as a sickness spawned by bourgeois decadence which would disappear after the revolution. Talk about an embracing of bourgeois prejudices and social institutions. Of course, it was wrapped in the usual fake-revolutionary rhetoric of the proletarian family as a "fighting unit for socialism." I was ripe for a Trotskyist understanding of Stalinism.

Fighting for Political Clarity

The RFU numbered 16 with histories in various organizations: Progressive Labor's Worker-Student Alliance in SDS; the DuBois Clubs (the Communist Party's youth group in the '60s); the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality); Maoist study groups; the International Socialists; the Peace and Freedom Party; the social-democratic New American Movement (NAM); a hodgepodge of ex-CPers and others. Our comrade Clay probably had the broadest experience—he had been in France the year after the May 1968 general strike. He had also spent time in SDS and a study group of ex-SWPers.

We were actively courted by a number of fake Trotskyists and social-democratic types. I guess what made the L&RU different was our seriousness about building an organization that would make a revolution—while we were determined to illuminate the source of gay oppression and find a party that would champion our fight, we also wanted to be taken seriously and challenged. The various opportunists patronized us; the SL uniquely argued for programmatic clarity from start to finish.

The pace of the political differentiation within our group quickened when we had a factional fight on the Russian Question—that is to say, over the adoption of the historic Trotskyist position in defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states from imperialism, without giving an ounce of political support to their Stalinist misleaders. In many ways the anti-Soviets in the L&RU, who were to later fuse with the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), did us a great service. Fighting the right wing in your own organization tends to clarify things. Not surprisingly, the two factions were on opposite sides of discussions over every key issue of program and building a Leninist party. But it was the fight on the Russian Question that ultimately set the stage for our subsequent understanding of the importance of program, the vanguard party and the final shedding of gay lifestylism and sectoralism.

The L&RU had been very fortunate to come across the SL in March 1976, intersecting a program that was steeped in the tradition of the Bolshevik Revolution. In those days, if you were serious about the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, studying the successful example of the Bolsheviks was a given. By the time I joined the L&RU in January 1977, the primary question I had to deal with was

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Sandy Lilydahl/UMass Amherst

Venceremos Brigade, 1970: SDSers help harvest Cuban sugar crop as expression of solidarity with Cuban Revolution. Cuban Stalinists' persecution of gays was subject of debate within New Left.

Book Launch

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919–1929

Lusk Commission

Combined with "The Revolutionary Age"

The Communist

All Power To The Workers!

Vol. I. No. 1. CHICAGO, ILL., SEPTEMBER 27, 1919 Five Cents

The Call to Action

THE Communist Party is now a fact. It issues its challenge to Capitalism, making clear its purpose of mobilizing the workers for the conquest of power. It issues a challenge to the workers, calling them to the militant struggle against Capitalism.

With the organization of the Communist Party, the American workers respond to the Communist International, unite with the revolutionary workers of the world in the final struggle against Capitalism.

Revolutionary Socialism in the United States passed being a faction, and now becomes a disciplined party of revolutionary activity. The Left Wing of yesterday is the Communist Party of today organized on the solid basis of a militant membership and a clear, unified, uncompromising pro-

The American proletariat is restless. Its more progressive elements have caught the vision of the proletarian revolutions in Europe. The mass of the workers suffer under more acute oppression, and are anxious for a change; but they are not conscious of cause and purpose. Capitalism is adopting the most terrible methods of repression to maintain the workers in submission, while it proves by its double utter incapacity to solve the problems of reconstruction that press down upon society. The workers are eager for a solution; they are developing the impulse toward workers' control of industry; they are moving slowly.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

The constitution of the Communist Party provides

Capitalism weakens the workers through a fuller understanding of their problems and the necessity for action.

The capitalists of the world, in a last desperate attempt to defend their power, have banded in the League of Nations. But the numerous workers of the world are equally organizing, organizing as the Communist International, which issues its challenge to the League of Nations and which will crush that League.

With the organization of the Communist Party, the American proletariat affiliates with the Communist International. The revolutionary spirit is now organizing itself here, organizing in a party of action, determined upon the conquest of power.

The Communist International is not a thing of a day. It is not the agent of a few romantic revolutionists. It is the proletarian

Founding convention of the Communist Party of America (CPA), one of two Communist parties formed in U.S. in 1919. First issue of CPA's *The Communist*, 27 September 1919.

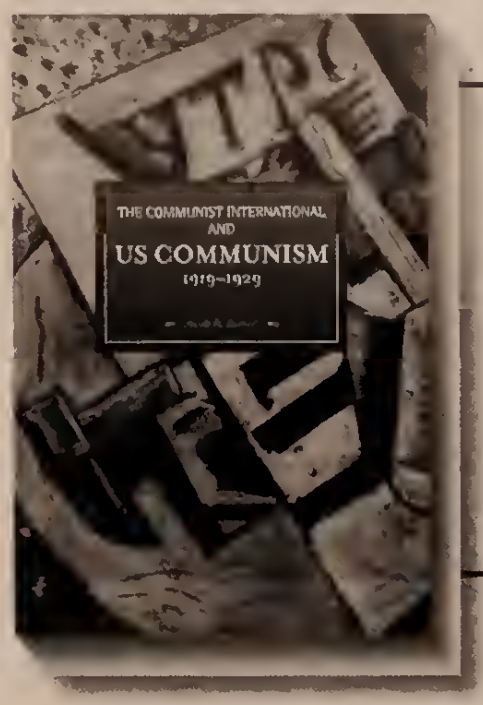
The following is the first part of a presentation, edited for publication, by Prometheus Research Library associate Jacob A. Zumoff, who discussed his book The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929. *The talk was delivered at a May 9 book launch in Oakland sponsored by the PRL, a working archive of American and international Marxist history, documentation and related interests. We reviewed the book, an instructive read for everyone from committed socialists to those just beginning to explore revolutionary politics, in* WV *No. 1067 (1 May).*

PART ONE

In November 1917, the Bolsheviks in Russia seized state power amid the devastation of the First World War, announcing that they were proceeding to build socialism. As the American Communist John Reed put it, the Bolshevik Revolution "shook the world" by making a workers state flesh and blood instead of just a goal. In Europe, in Asia and in the Americas, left-wing militants rallied to the Revolution and to the new Third, or Communist, International (the Comintern) that Lenin, Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders founded in early 1919.

The Bolsheviks envisioned the Comintern as a genuinely revolutionary International able to create Communist parties from those socialist militants who rejected "social chauvinism" (that is, support to imperialist militarism using socialist rhetoric) as well as parliamentary reformism, both of which had caused the social-democratic Second International to collapse at the beginning of WWI. By the summer of 1919, the American Communist movement was born, its enthusiasm matched only by its divisions.

The subject of this talk—and my recent book—is how these early Communists, inspired by the first successful workers revolution in history, sought to forge a party in the U.S. capable of making a revolution in this country. In particular, I analyze what I call the "Americanization" of Communism: how Communists understood and applied the lessons of the international Communist movement to the U.S. Although historians of American Communism are divided on many issues, they share a broad agreement that this process of Americanization was counterposed to what they often refer to as the "interference" of the Communist International. What I argue, on the other hand, is that in the early 1920s the Comintern helped the early Communists come to grips with American society. The Comintern reinforced the early Communist movement politically: for example, by stressing the importance of maintaining the independence of the working class and by emphasizing the importance of the fight against black oppression. By the end of the 1920s, however, reflecting the political degeneration of the Russian Revolution under Joseph Stalin, the Comintern's interventions became more negative.



The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919–1929

by Jacob A. Zumoff

443 pp.

Paperback:
Haymarket Books, 2015, $28.00

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There are several points that I want to make in this forum. First is the importance of the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks in the forging of a Communist Party (CP) in the U.S. Thousands of workers and intellectuals who saw themselves as fighting for socialism as they understood it rallied to the banner of the Bolsheviks. These included left-wing Socialists like John Reed, C.E. Ruthenberg and James P. Cannon, as well as many of the numerous semi-autonomous foreign-language federations that had been affiliated to the Socialist Party (SP). There were also many individual militants who had been in the ranks of the Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW. For all of them, the Bolshevik Revolution resonated strongly. As Ruthenberg put it in 1922: "Without the Russian revolution there would have been no Communist movement in the United States."

Unlike most of the Social Democratic parties in Europe, the official leadership of the U.S. Socialist Party did not openly support its "own" bourgeoisie in WWI, an interimperialist war in which workers had no side. On paper the SP opposed the war, and many of its leaders—of the left, the right and the center—were arrested for antiwar activities.

One of the key things to keep in mind about the American SP is that it was barely a party in the way that many of us would think of such. It was oftentimes more of a loose federation. For instance, most of the Socialist Party's major newspapers were not even owned by the party but were owned by different groups within the party, and each one often set its own political line. For the better part of a decade, there had been left-wing dissidents within the Socialist Party who were opposed to the gradual, reformist approach of the leadership. And after the Russian Revolution, these leftists looked to the Bolsheviks.

This leads to my second point: these early Communists had very little understanding of what Bolshevism was, what the difference was between, for example, left-wing émigré groups, militant labor unions and left-wing social democracy on the one hand, and a Leninist party on the other. These leftists supported the Bolsheviks because Lenin's party had made a revolution, but they did not understand *why* the Bolsheviks had been the only ones *capable* of making a revolution. And this situation was not unique to the United States. Much of the history of the Comintern under Lenin and Trotsky consisted of trying to teach their followers what Bolshevism consisted of, trying to impart the lessons of Leninism.

Previous Historians of American Communism

I want to talk about the historians of American Communism because my approach goes against most of what has been written by historians—what academics call the "historiography." The best historian of early American Communism was Theodore Draper. In the 1930s and '40s, he had been a supporter of the Communist Party, but he broke with the CP at the start of World War II. Although Draper was an anti-Communist by the time he wrote his books, he was an excellent historian. His two books on the CP in the 1920s, *The Roots of American Communism* (1957) and *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), are based on meticulous research, including both archival research and interviews with all the living Communist leaders willing to talk to him.

Draper's views are summarized in the conclusion of *American Communism and Soviet Russia*. He wrote, "Even at the price of virtually committing political suicide, American Communism would continue above all to serve the interests of Soviet Russia." He went on to argue that the influence of the Comintern cut off the CP from "other forms of American radicalism such as the open, democratic, pre-World War I Socialist party, the farmer-labor movement, or the syndicalist movement, all of which were far more indigenous and independent than the American Communist party."

In the 1970s and '80s, after many New Left militants had quit active politics and

gone to graduate school, a new generation of historians began to write about the CP. They mainly wrote about the 1930s, when the Communist Party was much larger, and they tended to emphasize what they saw as the "American" aspects of Communism. Nevertheless, they accepted the same basic framework as Draper. For them, the division between "American" and "foreign" in American Communism remained undisputed and they agreed that Soviet and Comintern influence was unquestionably negative. What the New Left historians tended to do was to invert Draper's schema; they argued that what they saw as the "American" traditions were much more prominent in the CP than Draper had allowed.

What sets my book apart is my emphasis on the way that the International helped the American Communist Party grow roots in America. The Comintern was animated by proletarian internationalism and understood that only international workers revolutions, particularly in the advanced industrial countries, could safeguard the Russian Revolution and lay the basis for international communism.

I should note that I am not the first historian to touch on this theme. Michael Goldfield, particularly in his writings on the black question, and Bryan Palmer, particularly in his recent biography of James P. Cannon, have both written on various aspects of it. And, most importantly, in many ways my approach goes back to Cannon's Trotskyist appreciation of the origins of American Communism—especially revealed in his correspondence with Draper, which was published in the early 1960s as *The First Ten Years of American Communism*. I also want to recommend a book of Cannon's writings that we at the Prometheus Research Library edited and published in 1992, *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism*.

The view expressed in my book runs ***counter*** to the perspective of much of the left. Thus, in the Summer 2014 issue of *International Socialist Review*, which is published by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), there is an article on the Comintern ("Zinovievism and the Degeneration of World Communism") by Joel Geier, one of the ISO's leaders, in which Geier sneers that "the American party was almost a ward of the Comintern." More recently, another social democrat, Dan La Botz, complained in a review that my book doesn't appreciate the domineering role of the Soviet Union in American Communism.

In *Lessons of October* (1924), Trotsky identified "the essential aspect" of Bolshevism as the "training, tempering, and organization of the proletarian vanguard as enables the latter to seize power, arms in hand" when presented with a revolutionary opportunity. Rather than have Communist parties mindlessly imitate the Bolsheviks, the early Comintern fought for them to assimilate the political lessons of the Bolsheviks and apply these to the conditions of each society. In a speech at the Third Comintern Congress in 1921, Lenin stressed that the Comintern's "fundamental revolutionary principles" were the same everywhere, but "must he adapted to the specific conditions in the various countries." Only later, under Stalin (in the context of a fight in the American CP), did the Comintern argue that capitalist societies were the same throughout the world and that differences were at most superficial.

M.S. Nappelbaum

V.I. Lenin with other members of the presidium of the First Congress of the Communist International, March 1919.

This all poses the question: if Draper was such a good historian, despite his ideological biases, why did I go through the trouble of re-tilling the ground he had cultivated so well? The answer is that a lot has changed since the 1950s and '60s, in particular with the capitalist counterrevolution and the destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. The counterrevolution was a disaster for the working class and the oppressed, most immediately in the former Soviet Union and the deformed workers states in Central and East Europe but also internationally.

More narrowly, the counterrevolution affected historians of American Communism in two broad ways. First, it led to the opening of archives in Moscow, including those of the Comintern. Draper's ability to marshal archival resources still amazes me, but the Comintern files dwarf what he was able to assemble. Second, the counterrevolution led to a view among the bourgeoisie that capitalism was triumphant, and to a retrogression of political consciousness among the left and labor movement. Today, amid a global capitalist depression, the very idea that capitalism can be replaced with a social system based on collective ownership and production for use rather than for profit is seen as obsolete or even impossible by most intellectuals, workers and oppressed people.

Historians of American Communism, in their own way, reflected this widening of archival sources combined with the narrowing of political vision. Some anti-Communist historians seized upon the archives to "prove" once and for all that Communists were pure evil. More seriously, there are historians who got their degrees largely after the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and who imbibed the "death of communism" of the last two decades. They treat Communists as an interesting historical phenomenon, with only academic importance, like, for example, the Shakers. If the revisionists were New Left historians, this school of thought can be referred to as the "No Left" historians, because it is informed by the collapse of any sense of a socialist alternative to capitalism.

Tim Davenport Collection

Some American delegates to Communist International's Fourth Congress in 1922, including James P. Cannon (standing, top left).

The Americanization of U.S. Communism

There are three aspects of the process of Americanization that I want to focus on. The first is the basic question of the need to form a unified, legal Communist Party; the second is the fight against black oppression; the third is the struggle for political independence of the working class.

The pre-Communist left wing in the U.S. was amorphous but had three main components, although oftentimes they overlapped. There were left-wing social-democrats like Ruthenberg; militant syndicalists who had heen in or around the IWW, like Cannon, who had also been a member of the SP; and foreign-language groups in the Socialist Party. They were united in their opposition to the Socialist leadership, but not much else. Even before forming a Communist Party, they split over whether they should remain in the SP to fight to win over other dissident Socialists, or leave the party immediately. This was resolved in practice when the leadership of the Socialist Party expelled those remaining at its 1919 convention, but the Communists remained divided into two separate parties, each of which had fundamentally the same political program.

What followed was a years-long process of mitosis, where the different groups formed a variety of competing parties. In my research, I looked at Ruthenberg's letters to his wife during this period. Ruthenberg was in the leadership of the Communist movement, and at one point he mused: "I am sick and tired of the whole business and only wish I could drop out without leaving people who are depending on me in the lurch." He didn't drop out, but many others did quit, probably tens of thousands. Along with the Red Scare repression of the immediate postwar period, this confusion was responsible for the swift decline in the ranks of left-wing socialists. In 1919, there were probably around 60,000 sympathizers of the left wing; five years later, there were about 17,000 Communists.

The Comintern leaders were no less frustrated. Max Bedacht, an American CP representative in Moscow, wrote to his comrades in 1921, complaining about "the little esteem that the general office has for the American business in general." Eventually, the Comintern, along with American leaders like Ruthenberg and Cannon, were able to get American Communists into ***one*** party. In a literal sense, without the Comintern there never would have been a Communist Party in the U.S.

I want to make a point here about unity. The type of unity that the Comintern advocated was ***communist*** unity: it was based on the fact that all the Communist groups shared the same political program, with secondary differences over tactics. The Comintern was clear that Communists needed to split from the centrists and reformists in the SP leadership, for example Morris Hillquit, who was specifically denounced in the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions for admittance. A Leninist party is formed through splits and fusions.

The eventual organizational unity did not mean that the early CP was a genuinely Bolshevik party. Forging a Bolshevik party in the United States meant more than uniting all the pro-Communist tendencies. It required a political break with the CP's left social-democratic and syndicalist origins. The most immediate challenge was the more than a dozen foreign-language federations, each of which had its own newspapers, its own huildings, its own functionaries, etc. Ironically, these first pro-Bolshevik groups in the U.S. were, in their organization, non-Bolshevik. In many ways, they were closer to the anti-Bolshevik Bundists in Russia, who had insisted on the exclusive right to carry out work among Jewish workers in the tsarist empire—similar to what is today called "identity politics," organizing solely on the basis of one's own ethnic identity, not on political program.

I want to make clear that the foreign-language groups were not appendages to the party. If anything, the English-language party was an appendage to the foreign-language groups. There was a Yiddish-language publication years before there was a *Daily Worker*. And when there was a *Daily Worker*, the Yiddish publication still had a higher daily circulation.

Jewish Museum/Art Resource

1940s cartoon by William Gropper in the Yiddish-language Communist publication *Morgen Freiheit* titled: "Garment Center with Newspaper Boy Selling Morgen Freiheit."

Then there were the Finns, who made up a huge chunk of the party.

While the dominance of the foreign-language federations kept the CP from Americanizing, the high number of foreign-language workers in the Communist ranks was actually a hallmark of a society like the U.S., which had been formed by waves of immigration. By the 1920s, huge sections of the working class, especially in major Northern cities, were first- or second-generation immigrants. Both the SP and the IWW had their own foreign-language groups. Communist parties in other countries with a largely immigrant-derived working class, such as Argentina and Canada, had similar issues and often had similar foreign-language groups.

Within the Socialist Party, these foreign-language federations essentially had free rein, reflecting the decentralized nature of American social-democracy. Many, but not all, foreign-language groups were on the left of the SP, and they contributed many of the early American Communists. But after affiliating to the CP, many continued to resist control by the American leadership—and when I say the American leadership I essentially mean the English-speaking leadership, many

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Book Launch...

(continued from page 7)

of whom were first- or second-generation immigrants themselves—and wanted to have a munopoly on work among their own particular ethnic or linguistic group. More importantly, on a political level they tended to see themselves as the foreign franchise of the European movement, not part of a movement in the United States. The foreign-language groups did not understand, and in many cases did not want tu understand, how the U.S. differed from Europe. They often acted as if they were in tsarist Russia right before the Revolution.

This perspective fed into a broader impatience, one shared by many early Communists in various places who felt that revolution was just around the corner. This is what Lenin polemicized against in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (1920). As one example, when public transportation workers in Brooklyn went on strike, the Communists issued a leaflet telling them to forget higher pay and instead fight for revolution. They weren't appreciated; I think they were driven off the picket line.

The early Communists believed that the U.S. was entering a period of severe repression, and that Communists had to be illegal as a matter of principle. Now, to be fair, in 1919-21 this was not so hard to believe on a superficial level. Europe was exploding and there was a wave of militant strikes throughout North America.

Bettmann

Daily World

Striking steel workers in Chicago, September 1919. Strike leader William Z. Foster was later recruited to the Communist Party. Right: Foster addressing 40,000 stockyard workers after victorious 1918 strike for union recognition.

The U.S. bourgeoisie was scared enough to institute widespread repression, the Red Scare, in which militants were swept up, jailed and often deported. But the point is this was a temporary exception, not the rule. The U.S. was not an unstable monarchy or a fascist regime; it was a bourgeois-democratic republic where the ruling class preferred the "rule of law" to naked repression and terror.

The "roaring twenties," a periud that is often associated with unprecedented affluence, posed particular problems for Communists. Rather than destroy the labor muvement, such as Mussolini did in Italy, the U.S. bourgeoisie weakened the working class through increased exploitation. This was assisted by the reactionary American Federation of Labor (AFL) trade-union bureaucracy, which preached "partnership" with capital instead of class struggle. Meanwhile, trade-union membership sank dramatically. Much like our own times, this reactionary period and a lack of social struggle threatened to sap the revolutionary juices from many Communists. Rather than deal with this reality, the foreign-language leaders and ultraleft Americans dwelled in a fantasyland of underground conspiracy and imminent revolution.

Bettmann

Foreign-born radicals herded to New York's Ellis Island for deportation during Red Scare, January 1920.

The Fight for a Legal Party

There were some Communist leaders, such as Cannon and Ruthenberg, who sensed that it was not necessary to be an illegal party. Being illegal hindered the party's real work. Moreover, American workers rejected a party that either was indifferent to its right to organize legally or too ignorant to know that it had that right. As a former organizer for the IWW, Cannon understood something about state repression, but he also understood the need to fight it, not just accept it as inevitable.

In 1921, the Communists formed a legal party, called the Workers Party. But even then, they did not agree on the relationship between the illegal party and legal party—what the Communists referred to as "Number 1" and "Number 2." A large section of the membership and leadership thought that only members of the illegal party were real Communists and that the people in the legal party were sellouts. Those who made a fetish out of illegality became known as the "geese," perhaps because they cackled so much. Cannon and other Americanizers were called the "liquidators" because they wanted a legal party. This fight was not only a tactical issue: it was about understanding American reality and what was necessary to build a party here. The American Communists, if left to their own devices, would have been unable to resolve this fundamental political problem.

Both the geese and the liquidators sent representatives to Moscow for the Fourth Comintern Congress in 1922. Cannon later recalled that, when he was in Moscow, Trotsky was sympathetic and told Cannon and Bedacht (another liquidator) to present their argument on "one sheet of paper, no more." That is probably an important political lesson in itself! After siding with Cannon and the liquidators, the Comintern leadership forcefully intervened into the American party. They made clear that a legal party was a necessity and that the illegal party should be liquidated.

This is only one example of Comintern fights against ultraleftism; there are others. The Comintern struggled to get American Communists to fight for Communist politics within the American Federation of Labor. The AFL bureaucracy, led by Samuel Gompers, was one of the most venal pro-capitalist union leaderships in the industrialized world. But the AFL organized the majority of unionized workers. In this case, the Comintern fought against not just foreign-language groups, but also many American sympathizers of the IWW (for example, John Reed). This fight paved the way to making the Communists a small, but real, factor in many trade unions. It also paved the way for recruiting William Z. Foster, perhaps the best-known militant labor leader in the U.S., who had led the 350,000-strong 1919 steel strike. At bottom, the question was how to forge a Bolshevik party under American conditions. And it took so-called foreigners to appreciate much of what made American society unique and how Communists should approach it.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Sandra Bland...

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long run by black Democrats, "community control" and myriad other schemes to reform the police have proved to be the hoaxes that they are. The "rough ride" in a police van that broke Freddie Gray's neck following his arrest by a gang of black and white cops is a chilling illustration.

Black Lives Matter also begs the federal Department of Justice to withhold funds from local police departments until discriminatory policing is ended. But as the saying goes, "The fish stinks from the head." The federal government enforces the racist "war on drugs," runs prisons and oversees the entire rotten system that the cops "serve and protect." Attorney General Loretta Lynch might launch an investigation into Bland's death because, in her words, "the black community is not handled with the same professionalism and courtesy" that other people get from the cops. How obscene! Black people are run roughshod over by a system that increasingly deems them an expendable population. And Lynch is its top cop. The role of the black Democrats is to channel the anger and frustration of the black masses back into prayer meetings and more schemes to "reform" the killers in uniform.

The aftermath of DuBose's killing has reinforced illusions in the possibility of holding cops "accountable." That cold-blooded shooting was captured on the body camera worn by the cop, who now faces charges of voluntary manslaughter and murder. But truth is, from Rodney King to Eric Garner no video has saved anyune from the cop perpetrators of racist terror. On a rare occasion, a cop might face charges or even more rarely receive some punishment, usually a slap on the wrist, all for the purpose of heading off any potential unrest and refurbishing the image of the police in order to make it easier for them to go about their business of repression. Simply put, the capitalist state apparatus cannot be made to act on behalf of the workers and the oppressed.

There is a way out: the road of integrated class struggle that combats every manifestation of oppression and leads to workers revolution. The anger of black people must be linked to the social power of the multiracial working class mobilized in opposition to the capitalist state and all its political parties, not least the Democrats. The Confederate flag has come down from a pole in South Carolina, but it will take a socialist revolution to uproot the social and material basis of black oppression, the American capitalist system. The Spartacist League raises the demands: Finish the Civil War! For a workers America! For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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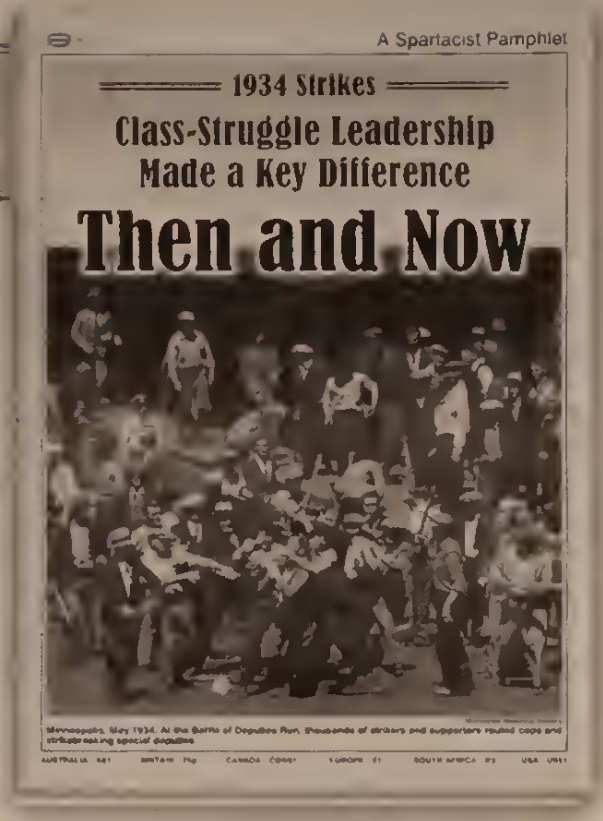

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Newly available for purchase is our publication Then and Now, *which explains how class-struggle leadership made a key difference in three citywide strikes in 1934. We reprint below the pamphlet's introduction describing its contents.*

The "Then and Now" article in this pamphlet addresses the crucial political lessons of the 1934 strikes by Minneapolis truckers, maritime workers on the West Coast and Toledo auto parts workers. Waged amidst the all-sided destitution of the Great Depression, these strikes, like others that year, confronted the strikebreaking forces of the capitalist state. A key difference was that these strikes *won*. What made this outcome possible is that their leaders were, at the time, committed to a program of class struggle. Unlike other trade-union leaders of that day—and today—they did not buy into the notion that the workers had interests in common with the employers, their political parties or their state. Instead, these strikes were fought by mobilizing the mass strength and solidarity of the workers in opposition to the forces of the capitalist class enemy.

The review of Bryan Palmer's book *Revolutionary Teamsters* provides a more in-depth study of the Minneapolis truckers' strikes, which were led by the Trotskyists of the Communist League of America (CLA). Here they confronted the Farmer-Labor Party (FLP) governor of Minnesota, Floyd Olson, who commanded the allegiance of many workers with his often radical-sounding, friend-of-the-little-guy rhetoric. The FLP postured as a "third party" alternative to both the Democrats and Republicans, but it was no less a capitalist party.

This is effectively addressed in the 1930 article "The Minnesota F.L.P." by Vincent Dunne, who went on to become a central leader of the truckers' strikes. As Dunne makes clear, the two-class Farmer-Labor Party was based on the subordination of the workers' struggles to farmers and other petty-bourgeois forces "whose political outlook is hounded by the illusion that it is possible to achieve security under the capitalist order." After an on-again, off-again alliance with the Democratic Party, the FLP finally merged with the Democrats in 1944.

Dunne and other CLA leaders of the Minneapolis strikes had been armed for battle against farmer-labor populism by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, who in the early 1920s had intervened to pull the young American communist movement back from giving political support to the capitalist "third party" candidacy of Robert La Follette, a maverick Republican Senator from Wisconsin. The excerpts from Trotsky's introduction to his book, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, summarize his opposition to this opportunist course which, if pursued, would have politically liquidated the fledgling Communist party.

Today, what remains of the gains that were won through the momentous class battles of the past continues to be ravaged in a one-sided class war enabled by trade-union misleaders, who have long forsaken the very means through which the unions were founded. The working class, the poor, black people, immigrants and countless others at the bottom of this society have paid the price in busted unions, broken lives and all-sided misery.

To be sure, it is not easy for the workers to win in the face of the forces arrayed against them. Many strikes, even very militant ones, will lose. But as was demonstrated in the three 1934 strikes addressed in this pamphlet, when important working-class battles are won it can dramatically alter the situation. These victories inspired a huge labor upsurge later in the 1930s that built the mass industrial unions in this country.

Hard-fought strikes can provide an important school of battle for the workers in which they learn the power of their collective strength and organization and begin to understand the class nature not only of the capitalist system but of the government, laws and political parties that defend its rule. But while able to strike important blows against the conditions of the workers' exploitation, trade-union struggle on its own cannot end that exploitation. To win that war there must be a struggle for working-class power under the leadership of a revolutionary party that can arm the workers with the understanding and consciousness of their class interests in the fight to emancipate labor and all of the oppressed from the bondage of capitalist exploitation. ■

Pensions...

(continued from page 12)

pension and other cutbacks that challenge the very capacity of people there to survive. In the 1980s, the union officialdom in the U.S. and Britain set the stage for the anti-labor offensive, signaling their prostration to their respective capitalist rulers by abandoning the PATCO air traffic controllers strike here as that union was being destroyed by Ronald Reagan and by sabotaging the militant British miners strike. Subsequently, the scope and intensity of these assaults were further fueled by the explosion of bourgeois triumphalism in the aftermath of the 1991-92 counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, disarming workers in the face of capitalist reaction.

In this country, the first major assault on pensions in the post-World War II period occurred in the early 1960s, the heyday of American capitalism, when thousands of auto workers found themselves without pensions after Studebaker went belly up. A decade later, the federal government launched the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) with the aim of covering pensions in the private sector that vanished when a corporation went bankrupt. With the financial bubbles and subsequent recessions in recent decades leading up to the massive 2008 economic implosion, countless pension plans evaporated (and IRAs and 401(k)s tanked with the market). As a result, it is now projected that the PBGC will run out of funds to cover abandoned pensions in the next decade. Meanwhile, lawmakers only pretended to put money into state-provided pensions, so that there are now almost one trillion dollars in unfunded obligations to workers covered by these plans.

In fact, the mechanisms used to disappear the benefits that had been funded by workers, normally by forgoing wage increases in exchange for a better-funded retirement, were simply outright theft. While Wall Street and private employers dipped into pension funds to fuel speculative ventures, state and other government pensions, including Social Security, were similarly looted to fund other projects by politicians who were loath to raise more tax revenues from a populace that from left to right correctly held them in low regard as predators solely devoted to feathering their own nests.

A special dishonorable mention must be given to the trade-union bureaucrats, who couple pious denunciations of the attacks on their members' wages and benefits with hand-in-glove collaboration with the bosses and government officials in the ongoing anti-labor assault. Thus, it is virtually a ritual that each newly negotiated union contract, normally combining peanut-sized raises with benefit cuts, is crammed down the throats of reluctant union members as the bureaucrats whine: "This is the best we can hope to get." In that spirit, Teamsters president James P. Hoffa hypocritically denounced the MPRA last month as "devastating for those least able to take such a hit to their living standards" (*Detroit News*, 15 July).

What Hoffa neglected to mention is that the union reps to the Central States Pension Fund, a combined employer/union board overseeing the pensions of about 275,000 working Teamsters, retirees and surviving spouses, had lobbied intensely *for* the MPRA bill because the Fund was running out of money. Or that seven years earlier in a sweetheart deal to expand union membership at United Parcel Service, the Teamsters tops had allowed the company to stop paying into that fund with predictable consequences for its liquidity. Recently, the same union bureaucracy began informing Teamsters members that pension cuts could be initiated as early as next year. Outraged union members are currently attempting to mobilize to beat back the pension-slashing attacks. The cutbacks should be scrapped. But it is not promising that a leading role in this effort is being played by Teamsters for a Democratic Union, an opposition grouping within the union notorious for both drafting and then helping implement the 1989 consent decree that led to government control over union elections and finances.

It must be remembered that the union benefits that are now being eaten away piecemeal were made possible by the hard class battles of the 1930s (see the new Spartacist pamphlet *Then and Now*), battles that were for the most part led by reds imbued with the understanding that workers share no common interests with their bosses. It will require similar battles led by militants so inspired to fend off today's attacks as well as to replenish the ranks of the trade unions and regain the wages and benefits that make survival possible, not least retirement at full wages. As a start, the labor movement should demand that the federal government insure the full value of both public and private pension funds. Government-provided health care should be universally available at no cost at the point of delivery. In the absence of concerted class struggle, the ruling class will not provide these or any other necessities to the workers whose labor it exploits, much less retirees who add no value to capitalist production.

The unions remain the general organizations of the working class, which workers must defend when they are under attack. However, it must be recognized that the bureaucrats that head the unions today have not the stomach to engage in the battles necessary to advance workers' class interests. As consummate labor lieutenants of capital, they seek to demonstrate their value to bourgeois rule by enforcing extortion from the working class, notably the gutting of wages and benefits. Recently, the labor tops have signaled their intent not to challenge low-wage standards by seeking to have their members excused from the latest minimum-wage increases.

Union officialdom, with its overwhelming fealty to the capitalist Democrats, has brought disaster on the American working class. It is imperative to replace these labor traitors with a leadership committed to the independence of the working class from all representatives of the class enemy. Leon Trotsky in *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* (1940) charted the way forward:

> "Does this mean that in the epoch of imperialism independent trade unions are generally impossible? It would be fundamentally incorrect to pose the question this way. Impossible are the independent or semi-independent reformist trade unions. Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions that not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but that set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent they are conscious of being, in addition, the organs of proletarian revolution."

To this end, it is crucially necessary to forge a party that is revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist. ■

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Greece...

(continued from page 1)

them." We of the International Communist League seek to foster common class struggle of workers internationally, in this case particularly in the European imperialist centers of Germany, France and Britain, against the bourgeois exploiters.

The TGG aims to mobilize larger forces in this defensive struggle, while recognizing that those forces will not share our political outlook. Comrades from the TGG and other ICL sections have distributed thousands of copies of the united-front call to key sectors of the working class in Athens and Thessaloniki (Greece's second-largest city). We have approached other organizations, including trade unions, leftist and immigrant rights groups, urging them to take up the call themselves and organize workers committees. Our comrades leafleted a massive rally on July 22 in Athens organized by PAME, the trade-union front of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), in opposition to the Greek parliament's vote that day for further measures dictated by the imperialists, as well as to a smaller rally of other leftists and trade unionists at the same time. The call has been received with interest and sparked debate.

No Support to Syriza!

Syriza was voted into office in January based on its pledge to ease the burden of austerity and to negotiate better terms from the imperialist creditors, while keeping Greece within the EU and maintaining the euro as Greece's currency. While most left groups either voted for Syriza or enthused over its victory, the TGG opposed any vote to Syriza because of its class character as a bourgeois party. Moreover, we made clear before the election that Syriza's commitment to keeping Greece in the EU amounted to a pledge to enforce more hunger and joblessness. This is now being demonstrated in practice to many working people who voted for Syriza. (For more on the left and Syriza, see "Syriza Is Class Enemy of Workers!" *WV* No. 1068, 15 May.)

Within a month of forming a coalition government with the right-wing Independent Greeks (ANEL), Syriza agreed to come up with its own raft of austerity measures, but Greece's creditors demanded more. With the imperialists and the Greek bourgeoisie whipping up fear of total economic collapse if Greece didn't accept a new bailout, Syriza organized a July 5 referendum on the latest EU austerity proposal, calling for a "no" vote with the stated intention of using the vote as a bargaining chip to secure better terms from the EU.

Our comrades of the TGG issued a statement for the referendum, "Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!" (reprinted in *WV* No. 1071, 10 July). Our comrades explained that "a 'no' vote would help rally the working people in Greece and throughout Europe against the EU capitalists and their bloodsucking banks." At the same time, our statement sharply opposed the Syriza-led government.

In the referendum, the KKE, a mass reformist party, called for casting an invalid ballot, claiming that a "no" vote was an indirect vote for Syriza's alternative austerity plan. *No!* The "no" vote was nothing other than a message to the imperialist leaders of the EU and IMF to go to hell. In the January elections, our comrades had given critical support to the KKE, which opposed Syriza and the EU. At the same time, we sharply criticized their nationalist-populist program, which is a major political obstacle to the struggle for socialist revolution. The KKE leadership's refusal to mobilize for a victory for the "no" vote in the referendum is in complete contradiction to its stated opposition to the EU.

In fact, many KKE members ignored their leadership and voted "no," and this was a good thing. In voting against the austerity package, the Greek population delivered a well-deserved slap in the face to the EU imperialists. By rushing after the referendum to lick the imperialists' boots and agree to more austerity, Syriza now stands far more exposed as lackeys of the EU imperialists than they would have if the "yes" vote had won.

For a Workers Europe!

The struggle against the EU is a question of vital importance for working people throughout Europe. The ICL has stood against the imperialist EU and the euro from the beginning. The common euro currency has allowed the German bourgeoisie to keep its industrial exports cheap throughout the eurozone. At the same time, the German capitalists, with the able assistance of the social-democratic SPD party and the trade-union bureaucracy, have driven down wages in Germany.

The imperialists and the Greek ruling class have stoked fears that exiting the EU and the euro would result in the economic isolation of Greece, a small country that is heavily reliant on imports, including for more than half of its food. The reality is that there is no way out of the spiral of debt and untrammeled imperialist looting of Greece within the framework of the EU. Greece should leave the EU and the euro.

Control over currency is one of the basic prerequisites for national sovereignty. Ordinarily, a debtor country can get some relief and regain economic competitiveness by devaluing its currency. But this is not possible within the euro. As the recent experiences of Argentina and Iceland show, default and currency devaluation, while initially harsh, may lead quickly to economic recovery and a rise in employment as the weakened currency makes exports more competitive.

Bourgeois elements, including the likes of German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, have argued that Greece should leave the eurozone, seeing that as a better way to maintain capitalist profits. In contrast, our opposition to the EU and the euro is based on the interests of the working class internationally. Repudiating the debt and leaving the EU would of course not end the exploitation of the working class by the Greek capitalists, nor would it free this dependent country from the ravages of the global imperialist system. However, it would create more favorable conditions for the working class to struggle in its own interests. Moreover, Greek exit from the EU would undermine that entire imperialist-dominated bloc. What is needed is a Socialist United States of Europe!

The catastrophe in Greece is part of a global capitalist economic crisis, which cannot be resolved within the borders of any single country, particularly one such as Greece with a low level of industry and resources. To build a society free of hunger, want and oppression requires a series of socialist revolutions that will expropriate the capitalist rulers, including in imperialist centers like the U.S. and Germany, and establish an international planned economy based on workers rule. What is needed is the construction of revolutionary workers parties, sections of a reforged Fourth International, to lead the working class to power, sweeping away the rotten capitalist-imperialist system. ■

Greek Trotskyists Initiate Call

The following call, which has been translated from Greek, was initiated by our comrades in the Trotskyist Group of Greece on July 17 and distributed in Athens and elsewhere in the country.

Repudiate Syriza's Sellout to the EU!

ENOUGH!

Repudiate Syriza's sellout to the EU and the banks. The EU and its currency the euro have been a tragic trap of suffering for the great bulk of the Greek people. The EU and euro must be repudiated. Committees composed of workers from different tendencies and their allies—youth, unemployed, immigrants, pensioners—must be set up throughout the country to struggle for this and toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them. This battle cannot be won within a parliamentary framework. We also call upon all like-minded and class-conscious working people throughout the misnamed European Union to support us in our aims and to consider the implications for their own countries. Break with the Capitalists and their Banks!

Build workers action committees to fight for:

- Cancel the debt! Down with the euro and the EU! Rip up the Third Memorandum!
- For common class struggle of Greek, German and other European workers against Schäuble, Merkel, Hollande and all the EU criminals!
- Workers defense guards to smash the fascist threat! Defend immigrants against racist attacks!
- Abolish the VAT and all regressive taxes! Decent housing for all, no evictions! For workers control of food distribution and prices!
- Abolish business and bank secrets—Open the books!
- Expropriate the banks, utilities, transportation, ports and shipping industry! Industrialize Greece!
- For decent pensions for all retirees pegged to the cost of living, now! Quality health care for all!
- Fight unemployment—Jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay!

Mobilize now! Hand this leaflet out at your workplace, campuses, neighborhoods, etc.

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Fruits of Stalinist Class Collaboration

No. 23, October 2014
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Down With the Imperialist EU!
Syriza: Class Enemy of Workers, Oppressed

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Reuters

Economic crisis in Greece has led to ominous growth of fascist Golden Dawn, shown here at 2013 rally.

Gay Liberation...

(continued from page 5)

Trotsky's permanent revolution versus the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." We put out a pamphlet titled *Permanent Revolution: A Vindication of Marxism*. The pamphlet is quite revealing in documenting our movement away from Maoism, and just how far we had left to go. What I remember most about that time was the intense study that took place over the next few months. After Trotsky's *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), we read *In Defense of Marxism* (1942) and *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) back-to-back with weekly discussions. My worn, heavily marked up copy of *In Defense of Marxism* testifies to its key role in winning me to a Trotskyist understanding of the Russian Question. Then came James P. Cannon and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* (1943). Next to Mao, Cannon was very refreshing.

The previous November, Jimmy "ethnic purity" Carter, the Democratic Party peanut farmer from Georgia, had been elected president. Reaction was in the air. After its defeat in Vietnam, U.S. imperialism was determined to refurbish its image and so came Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign. Washington embraced every right-wing tinpot dictator worldwide, especially in Latin America, with Jorge Rafaél Videla in Argentina as well as Augusto Pinochet in Chile, who came to power in a bloody CIA-engineered coup that toppled the popular-front Salvador Allende government.

That was also the year of Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign, which had overturned a gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida. We intervened into protest demonstrations that sometimes numbered up to 100,000 and put to the test our programmatic agreement with the Spartacist League. I remember sitting down with a good friend of mine from PCL at a bar in L.A., convincing him to join the SL/RFU contingent at a major gay rights march behind the slogans: "Down with Carter's Anti-Soviet 'Human Rights' Campaign! Full Democratic Rights for Homosexuals!" He and his partner joined the SL in the months after the fusion.

It's hard to talk about being won on the Russian Question without including some personal information. I had joined the L&RU as one of four people from the gay caucus at PCL. The other three were my best friends, sometime housemates and in a way mentors. They made up what would become the L&RU state capitalist minority, which advanced the position that Russia was ruled by a new capitalist class and was as "bad" as U.S. imperialism.

During what was probably a three-month fight, I was constantly being collared at school and at home and argued with. I was repeatedly tested to defend my position as it evolved, which was a good experience. Having the fight centered upon the history of a faction of the SWP that folded to bourgeois pressures was compelling. That is to say, our fight was over the same issue of whether to defend the Soviet Union that divided the SWP in 1939-40. Similar anti-Communist pressures in the 1970s led the minority to tail bourgeois public opinion.

WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at June 1977 gay rights demonstration, New York City. SL opposed Democrat Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign that was embraced by reformists and liberals at the time.

The L&RU minority would often pile on about the crimes of Stalinism. I would respond: so when did the property forms change? Why call this a new capitalist class and not a parasitic bureaucracy? In what year did the counterrevolution you say occurred actually happen? I was never satisfied with their convoluted answers and evasions. At some point I realized that first came their firm resolve to distance themselves from and not defend the Soviet Union. Only later did they develop a theory to justify it. They basically said that by 1938, after the purge trials, a state capitalist class was in control.

The Final Break from Sectoralism

In what was put out as a special supplement to the last issue of *Come Out Fighting* (May 1977), we addressed why gay oppression—unlike black oppression or women's oppression—is not a strategic question for Marxists. We pointed out that: "There is absolutely no question that gay people suffer some of the most brutal forms of physical and psychic abuse. However, intensity of oppression doesn't automatically translate into strategic importance." And we explained:

> "A strategic question is any contradiction that poses a fundamental block to the unification of the working class and is incontestably a principal obstacle to revolution. Without its correct resolution, the seizure of power, the beginning of socialist revolution, cannot be achieved....
>
> "On this basis, we can say, that the black question is a strategic question, and the gay question is not. Racism is probably the largest single brake on the action and consciousness of the American working class. No revolution can be made in the US without the active participation of the most advanced strata of black workers and without breaking the stranglehold of racism on the white workers....
>
> "Gay people are a sizable minority of the population, perhaps the largest single minority. However, by and large gay people do not occupy a special place in the economic life of US society. They are no more concentrated in the working class than in any other class....
>
> "The mistreatment of gays primarily takes the form of discrimination, legal harassment, medical mistreatment, and psychological abuse. It primarily affects gay workers as individuals, not as a group. Substantial super profits are not made by virtue of any special relationship of gays to production."

However, in this supplement, we still raised the slogan "Gay Liberation Through Socialist Revolution." Dropping that slogan was our final break from sectoralism.

In June of 1977, we held the Stonewall Conference at PCL. It was there that the majority declared our agreement on the Russian Question, our fusion perspective with the SL and the name change to the Red Flag Union. Others in attendance included the SWP, FSP, RSL and the Socialist Union. While the political meat of the conference was the Russian and party questions, there was a big brouhaha about the SL having a so-called "closet rule." This guideline is simply that comrades do not share their sexuality as part of their public political profile—i.e., that we want to be identified solely by the program we stand for. It seems a pretty simple thing, and it also provides protection for comrades who might be potentially targeted for victimization. The manufactured uproar over this was a rotten bloc by all those who lost out in seeking fusion with us, and an act of desperation. Here we are doing a national speaking tour, trumpeting a fusion of a group from the gay liberation milieu. And the key question, supposedly, is whether each comrade would publicly share their particular sexuality. The outrage was simply very sour grapes. It was especially rich coming from a group like the SWP which between 1962 and 1970 had forced homosexual members to resign.

The fusion with the RFU enriched the Spartacist League in many ways. It certainly led to a greater exposition of our understanding of homosexual and women's oppression and the need to replace the bourgeois nuclear family and the oppressive sexual roles it imposes. Organizationally, with the infusion of cadre in addition to our successful regroupments of the previous few years, we were able to shift some resources toward our local in Detroit, seeking to sink some roots in the black proletariat. RFUers all came in as party members and we were spread around the country. Two of our members were immediately co-opted to the Central Committee.

In closing, I have been musing about the relevance of this talk in terms of current youth. You've grown up in a post-Soviet world and there has been a retrogression in consciousness. When I was in Montreal, a comrade mentioned the exclusion of males at some feminist events. Again, sectoralism run amok—and whose interest does that serve? There is a deep alienation in class society that benefits the rulers. They proffer the notion that the best you can do is to carve out a protective niche to pursue your own personal interest in this world—a deeply anti-social standpoint.

Modern sectoralism also reflects pessimism about the viability of social struggle in general. But you will find the serious person who has a gut hatred of capitalism, racism and imperialist war and is searching for answers. I came across many outraged youth at the large demonstrations in protest of the racist cop murders of black men in the U.S., and I certainly found it challenging to disabuse them of their illusions and introduce them to a Marxist framework. But that's our job. There is even more social tinder out there ready to ignite. Nonetheless, while the anger is righteous, the outrage will dissipate if not linked to the power of labor.

While the Bolshevik Revolution is now 40 more years removed than when I came of age politically, the lessons still resound. Uniquely it is the International Communist League that carries that revolutionary tradition forward. It remains our model: a Leninist party leading the working class to state power on behalf of all the oppressed. I remember when I first learned of the Bolsheviks repealing all laws against homosexuality, and of their dogged pursuit to implement women's emancipation despite challenging objective conditions. The need for a group like the L&RU sort of evaporated in me. The young Soviet workers state had addressed this question without the participation of any gay pressure group. They simply pursued "the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured, and no one's interests are encroached upon." That is to say, all forms of sexual gratification are private matters. It was simply the application of the science of Marxism by a revolutionary leadership. So, as we approach the 100th anniversary of the Bolsheviks coming to power, we should continue to bring the lessons of October to today's youth. ■

VAAP

Women's demonstration in Russia, March 1917, with banner reading: "As Long as the Woman Is a Slave There Cannot Be Freedom—Long Live Women's Equality." Following 1917 October Revolution, Bolsheviks overturned criminal penalties for homosexuality.

Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Sandra Bland's Death

The Police Are Guilty

On July 13, the lifeless body of 28-year-old Sandra Bland was found hanging in a county jail cell in the town of Hempstead on the edge of East Texas. A Chicago native, Bland was political and outspoken, a black activist who wanted to end police terror and racism. Three days earlier, a Texas state trooper had pulled her over for not signaling a lane change. When she was less than cheerful and refused to put out her cigarette, the cop took her for "uppity." Dashboard video captured him drawing his Taser, threatening, "I will light you up," shortly before he forced Bland out of her car and off camera slammed her to the ground. She was then charged with assaulting a police officer.

Bland was stopped on the road to historically black Prairie View A&M University, her alma mater, founded during Reconstruction on the site of a former slave plantation. Cops make it their daily routine to patrol that road—part of an effort to keep black students, faculty and campus workers "in their place." As recently as 2003, the local district attorney threatened to prosecute Prairie View students if they tried to vote, and in the ensuing years they have had to continue to battle local officials in the courts over exercising that right.

The official version of how Bland died in her Waller County jail cell is the dubious story that she committed suicide. Her family, friends and many activists have insisted that she would not have hurt herself and suspect foul play. Whatever the exact circumstances of her death, the police are guilty as hell. And Bland is hardly the only one. Last month, six black women were found dead in jails across the country, while some 4,200 people have died in Texas alone over the past decade during attempted arrests or once behind bars.

What happened to Bland is an all too familiar story in the states of the former Confederacy. Indeed, on the streets of the U.S., North and South, whether isolated backwaters or cosmopolitan centers, stopping, beating and shooting black men and women for "driving while black" is standard police procedure. A scant six days after Bland died, 43-year-old Samuel DuBose was blown away by a University of Cincinnati cop who stopped him because his front license plate was missing. The *Washington Post* has tallied over 570 fatal police shootings nationwide already this year (more than the FBI, which nominally tracks the statistic, has reported for every year since 1976). Black people were killed at three times the rate of whites.

At protests sparked by these killings, many ask: why does it keep happening? Black people in the U.S. constitute an oppressed race-color caste, stigmatized for the color of their skin regardless of class. The main enforcers of this social order are the cops, the thugs in blue at the core of the repressive state machinery by which one class, the ruling capitalists, holds down another, the workers. Cop terror against black people—whether down and out or up and coming—is not an "excess"; it's a calculated program. It is the way U.S. capitalism, which is built on the bedrock of black oppression, resolves the contradiction between the assertion of some formal equal rights and the forcible segregation of the bulk of the black population at the bottom of society. Black oppression serves the capitalist rulers by keeping working people from uniting against the class enemy.

The racist killers were doing what they are hired, trained and paid to do, something that no amount of reform will change, including the "community involvement and oversight strategies" demanded by the Black Lives Matter movement. Waller County itself shows what "community control" of the cops looks like in Texas. As chief of police in Hempstead, Glenn Smith was so blatantly racist even by local standards that he got fired in 2008. He ran for sheriff later that year and was elected by a landslide. Smith is now in charge of the investigation of Bland's death in the jail he oversees. But even where blacks are the majority, as in Baltimore, a city

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Pension Robbery

Bosses to Workers: Slave Away, Drop Dead

Last December, Congress and the Obama administration launched a stealth attack on pensions of workers covered by multiemployer plans in industries like mining, trucking and construction by passing and signing into law the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA). The MPRA is a "reform" in the same sense that the guillotine reformed executions previously carried out by the rather more extended process of drawing and quartering. This measure came into being without a whisper of debate as an amendment to the omnibus budget legislation rushed through to provide the monies necessary to run the government.

The MPRA allows the bosses not just to whack the pensions of active workers but to decrease the pensions of retirees, an option that was blocked by existing legislation until the act was passed. It is estimated that 10 percent of multiemployer plans, covering about one million workers, are facing insolvency. The Treasury Department recently appointed a hatchet man, Kenneth Feinberg, to oversee the MPRA's implementation, supposedly to block unwarranted employer attempts to curtail pensions, but more to the point, investing him with the power to slash benefits if cutbacks are rejected by workers and retirees.

Wisconsin Committee to Protect Pensions

Chicago, April 8: Teamsters protest cuts to pensions proposed by union trustees of Central States Pension Fund and permitted under new federal law.

In recent months, egregiously underfunded public employee retirement systems in several states, most notably Illinois and Pennsylvania, have been targeted for benefit slashing. Democrats and Republicans alike have sought ways to get around existing legislative roadblocks to such attacks. As the pension rollbacks in bankrupted Detroit demonstrate, in the absence of any meaningful social struggle by workers and retirees, the road to such cutbacks by the capitalist rulers will be cleared in one manner or another. Not surprisingly, given the scent of blood in the water, calls for the "reform" of Social Security have recently resurfaced, including the raising of the retirement age. With only 18 percent of private-sector workers covered by plans that guarantee specified benefits upon retirement (down from 35 percent in the early 1990s), state/government pensions, like Social Security itself, are the last major repository of such plans.

In Pennsylvania, the Republican-dominated state senate, with all-out support from many Democratic mayors throughout the state, recently passed a bill to end defined-benefit coverage for state workers by forcing them into 401(k) defined-contribution plans. Democratic governor Tom Wolf recently vetoed this rollback, preferring alternative strategies to screw the workers. The anarchic capitalist system is incapable of providing financial security for its subjects who face increasing immiseration in direct relation to the increasing wealth of the ruling class that owns the productive property. In the short run, however, the difference between defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans is significant. A ***defined-benefit*** plan pays out a guaranteed monthly amount, normally dependent on wages earned, upon retirement; a ***defined-contribution*** plan puts the onus on the individual, specifying what you must put into the fund, with generally lower payouts and no guarantee of anything upon retirement.

For decades now, American workers have been subjected to cutbacks to pension and health benefits. Indeed, such benefits are under similar attack in virtually every industrial society, especially of late Canada and Britain. Today in Greece, the dominant imperialist powers of the European Union (i.e., Germany and France) are committed to enforcing

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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Spartacist banner at "Millions March NYC" demonstration against racist police killings, 13 December 2014.

Class-Struggle Road to Black Freedom

We print below a presentation, edited for publication, given to a Spartacist League meeting in New York City this summer by Workers Vanguard *Editorial Board member Paul Cone.*

With Martin Luther King Jr. all the rage these days, I thought I'd open with Malcolm X's rejoinder to King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the 1963 March on Washington. In addition to earlier calling the March a farce, Malcolm said: "I'm one of the 22 million black people who

PART ONE

The Roots of Black Oppression

are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy.... I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare" ("The Ballot or the Bullet," 3 April 1964). Fifty-one years later, for the ghetto masses that nightmare has only gotten more terrifying.

The roll call of recent victims of racist cop terror is well known: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland and now 19-year-old college football player Christian Taylor to name *just a bare few*. Taylor, a Black Lives Matter activist, presciently tweeted last year: "Police taking black lives as easy as flippin a coin, with no consequences."

The explosions of outrage following the police strangulation of Eric Garner in Staten Island, the gunning down of black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson and the killing of Freddie Gray in Baltimore have triggered in the capitalist ruling class some post-traumatic stress disorder flashbacks to the hundreds of ghetto upsurges between 1964-68. Compared to the flames that engulfed Watts, Newark, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Cleveland and many other cities at that time, the past year's events could be characterized as bonfires. However, in mobilizing the National Guard, enacting draconian curfews and brutalizing and arresting protesters, the capitalist rulers express their apprehension that everyday cop terror, grinding oppression and poverty have built up enormous social tinder that could ignite in a broader social explosion.

Our comrades joined protests in Ferguson, Baltimore, Charleston and elsewhere, highlighting our class opposition to the racist Democratic Party of Obama/Clinton and combating illusions expressed in calls for federal oversight, "community control" of the police, and civilian review boards, whose role has always been to whitewash the killers in uniform. Notable was the occasional utterance of the epithet "white skin privilege" in attempts to silence our Marxist intervention.

Some younger comrades, though familiar with other methods of anti-communist censorship, had not been acquainted with what we older folk thought was a relic of the New Left of the 1960s-70s. Apparently, "white skin privilege" has become a regular feature of college curricula, radical-liberal conferences and the blogosphere. Now the term is even used in the mainstream media. "Privilege checking" has become one of the latest additions to the dictionary of political correctness. In early July, for example, the *New York Times* website ran a short documentary, *A Conversation with White People on Race*. One woman's comment was representative: "I think we are all implicated in a racist system, and I play my part in it as a white person. So I do have individual responsibility and accountability."

This increasingly common view flips the matter on its head. Prejudice is not the cause of black oppression; rather, the capitalist rulers' special oppression of black people, integral to American capitalism, fosters anti-black discrimination. What she expressed is the smoke and mirrors by which the capitalists throw the responsibility for the oppression of black people upon the population as a whole—if white people weren't prejudiced, there would be no problem. In the 1950s and '60s, this refrain was common to the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations, which cautioned civil rights activists to "go slow" in pushing for change, claiming the need to patiently win over the hearts of segregationists.

For those like Noel Ignatin (Ignatiev) and Ted Allen, who around 50 years ago advanced "white skin privilege" theory while professing adherence (albeit tenuous) to Marxist revolutionary politics, the white working class was seen as materially benefiting from black oppression and to have a vested interest in perpetuating anti-black hostility. Ignatin & Co. eschewed any prospect of integrated struggle to further the common interests of black and white workers and dismissed the unions, which are the basic defense organizations of the working class, as bourgeois institutions—a way of making common cause with the class enemy. Similarly, they declared the Soviet Union (a workers state, although bureaucratically degenerated) to be capitalist, thereby writing it off and aligning themselves with their own imperialist masters.

The theory of "white skin privilege" serves only to conceal that *the oppression of black people persists because it is a key*

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Unbroken and Unbowed Fighter for the Oppressed

Hugo Pinell Assassinated

See article on page 6

"Karl Marx" by V.I. Lenin

We print below the first section of "Karl Marx," written by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin for a popular Russian encyclopedia in 1914 (not 1913 as Lenin mistakenly recalled in his 1918 preface). The biographical sketch below will be followed in future issues of Workers Vanguard *by the rest of the work, which provides a basic introduction to key aspects of Marxism, including philosophy, economics and the class struggle. The translation is reprinted from the* Collected Works *of Lenin (Progress Publishers).*

PART ONE

Preface

This article on Karl Marx, which now appears in a separate printing, was written in 1913 (as far as I can remember) for the *Granat Encyclopaedia*. A fairly detailed bibliography of literature on Marx, mostly foreign, was appended to the article. This has been omitted in the present edition. The editors of the *Encyclopaedia*, for their part, have, for censorship reasons, deleted the end of the article on Marx, namely, the section dealing with his revolutionary tactics. Unfortunately, I am unable to reproduce that end, because the draft has remained among my papers somewhere in Cracow or in Switzerland. I only remember that in the concluding part of the article I quoted, among other things, the passage from Marx's letter to Engels of April 16, 1856, in which he wrote: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid." That is what our Mensheviks, who have now sunk to utter betrayal of socialism and to desertion to the bourgeoisie, have failed to understand since 1905.

* * *

Marx, Karl, was born on May 5, 1818 (New Style), in the city of Trier (Rhenish Prussia). His father was a lawyer, a Jew, who in 1824 adopted Protestantism. The family was well-to-do, cultured, but not revolutionary. After graduating from a *Gymnasium* [high school] in Trier, Marx entered the university, first at Bonn and later in Berlin, where he read law, majoring in history and philosophy. He concluded his university course in 1841, submitting a doctoral thesis on the philosophy of Epicurus. At the time Marx was a Hegelian idealist in his views. In Berlin, he belonged to the circle of "Left Hegelians" (Bruno Bauer and others) who sought to draw atheistic and revolutionary conclusions from Hegel's philosophy.

After graduating, Marx moved to Bonn, hoping to become a professor. However, the reactionary policy of the government, which deprived Ludwig Feuerbach of his chair in 1832, refused to allow him to return to the university in 1836, and in 1841 forbade young Professor Bruno Bauer to lecture at Bonn, made Marx abandon the idea of an academic career. Left Hegelian views were making rapid headway in Germany at the time. Ludwig Feuerbach began to criticise theology, particularly after 1836, and turn to materialism, which in 1841 gained the ascendancy in his philosophy (*The Essence of Christianity*). The year 1843 saw the appearance of his *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*. "One must oneself have experienced the liberating effect" of these books, Engels subsequently wrote of these works of Feuerbach. "We [i.e., the Left Hegelians, including Marx] all became at once Feuerbachians." At that time, some radical bourgeois in the Rhineland, who were in touch with the Left Hegelians, founded, in Cologne, an opposition paper called *Rheinische Zeitung* (The first issue appeared on January 1, 1842). Marx and Bruno Bauer were invited to be the chief contributors, and in October 1842 Marx became editor-in-chief and moved from Bonn to Cologne. The newspaper's revolutionary-democratic trend became more and more pronounced under Marx's editorship, and the government first imposed double and triple censorship on the paper, and then on January 1, 1843, decided to suppress it. Marx had to resign the editorship before that date, but his resignation did not save the paper, which suspended publication in March 1843. Of the major articles Marx contributed to *Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels notes, in addition to those indicated below (see *Bibliography*), an article on the condition of peasant vine-growers in the Moselle Valley. Marx's journalistic activities convinced him that he was insufficiently acquainted with political economy, and he zealously set out to study it.

In 1843, Marx married, at Kreuznach, Jenny von Westphalen, a childhood friend he had become engaged to while still a student. His wife came of a reactionary family of the Prussian nobility, her elder brother being Prussia's Minister of the Interior during a most reactionary period—1850-58. In the autumn of 1843, Marx went to Paris in order to publish a radical journal abroad, together with Arnold Ruge (1802-1880; Left Hegelian; in prison in 1825-30; a political exile following 1848, and a Bismarckian after 1866-70). Only one issue of this journal, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, appeared; publication was discontinued owing to the difficulty of secretly distributing it in Germany, and to disagreement with Ruge. Marx's articles in this journal showed that he was already a revolutionary, who advocated "merciless criticism of everything existing," and in particular the "criticism by weapon," and appealed to the *masses* and to the *proletariat*.

In September 1844 Frederick Engels came to Paris for a few days, and from that time on became Marx's closest friend. They both took a most active part in the then seething life of the revolutionary groups in Paris (of particular importance at the time was [the anarchist Pierre-Joseph] Proudhon's doctrine, which Marx pulled to pieces in his *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847); waging a vigorous struggle

John Mayall

Karl Marx, 1872.

against the various doctrines of petty-bourgeois socialism, they worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary *proletarian socialism*, or communism (Marxism). See Marx's works of this period, 1844-48, in the *Bibliography*. At the insistent request of the Prussian Government, Marx was banished from Paris in 1845, as a dangerous revolutionary. He went to Brussels. In the spring of 1847 Marx and Engels joined a secret propaganda society called the Communist League; they took a prominent part in the League's Second Congress (London, November 1847), at whose request they drew up the celebrated *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in February 1848. With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society.

On the outbreak of the Revolution of February 1848, Marx was banished from Belgium. He returned to Paris, whence, after the March Revolution, he went to Cologne, Germany, where *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was published from June 1, 1848 to May 19, 1849, with Marx as editor-in-chief. The new theory was splendidly confirmed by the course of the revolutionary events of 1848-49, just as it has been subsequently confirmed by all proletarian and democratic movements in all countries of the world. The victorious counter-revolutionaries first instigated court proceedings against Marx (he was acquitted on February 9, 1849), and then banished him from Germany (May 16, 1849). First Marx went to Paris, was again banished after the demonstration of June 13, 1849, and then went to London, where he lived till his death.

His life as a political exile was a very hard one, as the correspondence between Marx and Engels (published in 1913) clearly reveals. Poverty weighed heavily on Marx and his family; had it not been for Engels's constant and selfless financial aid, Marx would not only have been unable to complete *Capital* but would have inevitably been crushed by want. Moreover, the prevailing doctrines and trends of petty-bourgeois socialism, and of non-proletarian socialism in general, forced Marx to wage a continuous and merciless struggle and sometimes to repel the most savage and monstrous personal attacks (*Herr Vogt*). Marx, who stood aloof from circles of political exiles, developed his materialist theory in a number of historical works (see *Bibliography*), devoting himself mainly to a study of political economy. Marx revolutionised this science (see "The Marxist Doctrine," below) in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (Vol. I, 1867).

The revival of the democratic movements in the late fifties and in the sixties recalled Marx to practical activity. In 1864 (September 28) the International Workingmen's Association—the celebrated First International—was founded in London. Marx was the heart and soul of this organisation, and author of its first Address and of a host of resolutions, declarations and manifestos. In uniting the labour movement of various countries, striving to channel into joint activity the various forms of non-proletarian, pre-Marxist socialism ([Giuseppe] Mazzini, Proudhon, [Mikhail] Bakunin, liberal trade-unionism in Britain, Lassallean vacillations to the right in Germany, etc.), and in combating the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx hammered out a uniform tactic for the proletarian struggle of the working class in the various countries. Following the downfall of the Paris Commune (1871)—of which Marx gave such a profound, clear-cut, brilliant, *effective* and revolutionary analysis (*The Civil War in France*, 1871)—and the Bakuninist-caused cleavage in the International, the latter organisation could no longer exist in Europe. After the Hague Congress of the International (1872), Marx had the General Council of the International transferred to New York. The First International had played its historical part, and now made way for a period of a far greater development of the labour movement in all countries in the world, a period in which the movement grew in *scope*, and *mass* socialist working-class parties in individual national states were formed.

Marx's health was undermined by his strenuous work in the International and his still more strenuous theoretical occupations. He continued work on the refashioning of political economy and on the completion of *Capital*, for which he collected a mass of new material and studied a number of languages (Russian, for instance). However, ill-health prevented him from completing *Capital*.

His wife died on December 2, 1881, and on March 14, 1883, Marx passed away peacefully in his armchair. He lies buried next to his wife at Highgate Cemetery in London. Of Marx's children some died in childhood in London, when the family were living in destitute circumstances. Three daughters married English and French socialists: Eleanor Aveling, Laura Lafargue and Jenny Longuet. The latter's son is a member of the French Socialist Party.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

WORKERS VANGUARD

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On ISIS and U.S. Imperialism

Wheatland, Iowa
29 May 2015

Comrades,

I have been concerned about the direction of SL, ICL-FI writings on the Middle East, specifically ISIS (or ISIL or IS Islamic State). SL initially took the position of military support but no political support of all forces opposing U.S. imperialism. This seems to have evolved into ISIS is the lesser of two evils with copious disclaiming and condemnation of just about everything ISIS does. I think you are asking the wrong question in this situation and getting a very bad answer.

What is, or should be the Marxist Leninist approach? In the First great inter-imperialist war, World War One, the left socialists, which included Lenin, put forward Revolutionary Defeatism. In Russia where the policy succeeded Lenin and the Bolsheviks made very clear before, during, after the revolution that they were *not* agents of Germany, Russia's chief enemy, nor working for a German victory, in fact after the victory of the revolution they had to fight Germany and the other imperialist powers as well. Likewise with World War II the SWP opposed the imperialist war, but they were never agents of the Nazis. The point being that opposing an imperialist power's war does not necessarily mean supporting their opponent. That is two separate questions.

I would say that ISIS is a fascist organization with the particulars that come with having fundamentalist Islam as its ideology. They are the enemy of all socialist movements. It doesn't matter if you regard them as the chief or some second or third rate enemy, they are the enemy. Marxists do not support fascists on any level.

The last time a situation with many similarities to this one came up SL had a different and much better approach. In Iran when the Shah, a client of western imperialists, was overthrown by Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" SL put forward the slogan "Down with the Shah, down with the mullahs, Workers to power" (or something substantially similar, I don't have it in front of me now). In other words opposition to both the imperialists and the Islamic fascists.

The Kurds. Right now the de facto SL policy for the Kurds is to stand by and cheer as the Islamic fascists kill them. This is supposedly going to increase the revolutionary potential in the U.S. Actually what it seems to be is an abandonment of any revolutionary perspective for the region and petty bourgeois vindictiveness for a people whose current leadership is a client of imperialism. When ISIS arose they bloodily attacked Shia and Kurdish regions. The Kurds in self defense resisted. The Kurds fought well, but lacked heavy weapons and were threatened with death or expulsion from the country. For their own reasons the U.S. offered arms and tactical air support to the Kurds. The Kurds really had no choice but to accept. Revolutionaries should support the Kurds' defense, but oppose their deployment to other parts of Iraq to support imperialist aims. What should be done is to create a revolutionary Kurdish party to oppose the pro-imperialists. You will never do it with a program that cheers Islamic Fascists as they kill, rape, and dispossess the Kurds in Syria and Iraq.

Remember in these situations, the enemy of my enemy is also my enemy.

For a revolutionary party,
Loren S.

***WV* replies:**

The bottom line of Loren S.'s letter is that ISIS is so abhorrent, so evil, "fascist" as he calls it, that "democratic" U.S. imperialism is preferable to it. In reality, the many gruesome crimes of ISIS pale in comparison to those of the U.S. and other imperialists, whether measured in numbers, reach or impact. The trails of blood that blight the Near East today are consequences of a century of "divide and rule," war and overall economic and social retardation imposed by the imperialist system. ISIS itself grew out of the devastation that followed the 2003 invasion of Iraq as well as the support funneled by the U.S. and its allies to the reactionary forces fighting the brutal bourgeois regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

We take a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and forces acting as their proxies, including the Baghdad government, the Shi'ite militias, the Kurdish *pesh merga* in northern Iraq and the Syrian Kurdish nationalists. At the same time, we are in staunch political opposition to ISIS, whose bloodthirsty methods and retrograde outlook are truly repugnant.

The bottom line for Marxists is that a setback for the U.S. and its proxies would impede imperialist designs for the region. This could only aid the proletariat and oppressed of the Near East, including the Kurdish masses. Such a setback could also promote domestic opposition to U.S. imperialism among a war-weary populace that has been ground down by years of economic crisis and a "recovery" from which workers haven't benefited. We Marxists aim to turn the disillusionment and anger of working people in the U.S. into class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. It is through such struggle that the proletariat will be won to the program of socialist revolution to destroy the imperialist beast from within.

Such a perspective begins with the understanding that the U.S. imperialists are the main enemy of working people throughout the world. This is precisely what Loren rejects. To buttress his argument, he cites a number of examples that have no relation to the issue at hand. The case of Iran in 1978-79 was one of competing bourgeois forces—the Shah and the Islamists—fighting over control of the country amid a situation where the question of a proletarian struggle for power was posed. It was not one where the imperialists waged war against one side or another. The First and Second World Wars were *interimperialist* wars to redivide the globe among the "Great Powers." In such wars, Marxists have a revolutionary defeatist line toward all the belligerents (except for the USSR in World War II, which Marxists unconditionally militarily defended).

And then there's the canard of "Islamic fascists." Loren describes ISIS (as well as the mullahs in Iran and presumably other Islamist forces) as "fascists," writing, "They are the enemy of all socialist movements." So are the bourgeois nationalists and, above all, the imperialists. Yet Loren does not ascribe that label to them. ISIS and other Islamists are no more fascist than are any of the multitudes of reactionary and murderous forces that rule most of this planet. In reality, the term "Islamic fascists" was coined as part of the ideological campaign to justify the "war on terror." It serves as a salve for liberals making their peace with U.S. imperialism and lends credence to the bourgeois-democratic veneer of the imperialists. In throwing it around as a sort of curse word, Loren simply reveals how much he imbibes of the democratic pretensions of U.S. imperialism.

But even if ISIS did represent a fascist force, it would not alter our principled position of militarily defending them against imperialism. In 1938, with the Second World War looming, Leon Trotsky addressed a hypothetical attack by "democratic" British imperialism against Brazil, which was then ruled by the fascistic Vargas regime:

> "In this case I will be on the side of 'fascist' Brazil against 'democratic' Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy."
>
> —"Anti-Imperialist Struggle Is Key to Liberation," 23 September 1938

It is telling that in opposing our position, Loren cites only the Kurds; for example, he raises no objection to our line in relation to the Shi'ite militias. The implication is that somehow the Kurdish forces are inherently progressive. Actually, the fighting in Iraq and Syria has seen communalist massacres on all sides; we originally had no side until U.S. imperialism directly intervened. While ISIS revels in its barbarism and brutality, it does not have a monopoly on such qualities among the contending forces in the region. One of the reasons ISIS has been able to find support among Sunni Arabs is that they have faced murderous communalism at the hands of Shi'ite and Kurdish militias—such as the *pesh merga* forces who participated in the U.S.-led 2004 assault

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Book Launch

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929

The following is the second part of a May 9 presentation, edited for publication, by Prometheus Research Library associate Jacob A. Zumoff promoting his book The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929. *The first part of Zumoff's presentation, published in* WV *No. 1072 (7 August), dealt with the origins of the Communist movement in the U.S. under the impact of the 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent struggle for a unified, legal Communist Party (CP).*

Beinecke Library

Moscow, 1922: Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay speaking on racial oppression in U.S. at Fourth Congress of Communist International.

PART TWO

Another important intervention by the Comintern was to push the American Communists to take up the fight against black oppression. One of the distinguishing features of capitalism in the United States is that it rests upon black oppression, going back to the colonial period and the institution of slavery. After the Civil War had abolished slavery, the betrayal of Radical Reconstruction—the brief period when former slaves and their allies gained power in the former slave South—led to the consolidation of black people into a race-color caste at the bottom of American society. Only the destruction of capitalism and the creation of a socialist society can lead to the liberation of black people in the U.S., that is, finishing the tasks of the Civil War.

One of the biggest historical failings of American Social Democracy—its left wing included—was its position on black oppression. There were some prominent Socialists, like Victor Berger of Milwaukee, who were outright racists and actually held that socialism would be segregated. There were others, for example, left-wing Socialist leader Eugene Debs, who were not racists. Debs in fact wrote forcefully against racism, but his approach, what we could call color blindness, was basically that white workers and black workers should get together, unite and fight. Debs said, "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races." His conclusion was that, "The Socialist Party is the party of the working class, regardless of color—the whole working class of the whole world." While he was anti-racist, this color-blind approach did not appreciate or understand the special role of black oppression in American capitalism.

This color blindness was inherited by the early American Communists. For instance, there was only one black person among the thousands of founding Communists in 1919. So how did the Communists come to pay attention to the question of black oppression? It was the Comintern, and in the first instance it was Lenin, who pushed the issue and forced the American Communists to come to grips with this key aspect of American society.

In contrast to the American Socialists, the Bolsheviks had long emphasized what they saw as "special oppression"—that is to say, oppression that was not just reducible to class exploitation. In his seminal work *What Is To Be Done?* [1902], Lenin had argued that the revolutionary party must be a "tribune of the people," fighting against all forms of oppression and linking these fights to the struggle for proletarian power. Lenin called tsarist Russia the "prison house of peoples" and saw that the Bolshevik Party needed to fight against the oppression of the myriad national and ethnic groups by Great Russian chauvinism.

From this revolutionary internationalist perspective, the Comintern essentially *forced* American Communists to take up what was then called the "Negro question." To give a concrete example, at the Second Comintern Congress in 1920, Lenin made John Reed give a report on this issue. In Reed's papers at Harvard, I found that Reed wanted to give a report on the trade-union question and wrote to Lenin, asking: is it really important that I give a report on the black question? Lenin wrote back two words: "Absolutely necessary." So, this intervention by the Comintern, by foreigners as it were, seeded the ground for Communists to begin the work of recruiting radical black workers and intellectuals, something that would flower later on.

The birth of the American Communist movement coincided with one of the worst waves of racist violence in American history, what is known as the "Red Summer," when there were racist pogroms in several cities. It also coincided with the start of what is now called the "Great Migration" from the Jim Crow South. More than a million black people moved from the rural South, both to urban areas in the South and, more importantly, to cities in the North such as Chicago and New York. There, black people faced the racial oppression inherent in American capitalism, but they also began a process of becoming integrated into the working class, albeit paid less, treated worse, and the last hired and the first fired. In New York and elsewhere, these migrants from the South were joined by black immigrants from British and other European colonies in the Caribbean. This contributed to the development of what was known as the "New Negro" movement, which was in favor of self-defense against racist violence and oppression. This movement was contradictory, encompassing black nationalists, integrationists and people of various other types.

The Bolshevik Revolution had a big impact on many in the ghettocs, from Harlem to the South Side of Chicago and elsewhere. The Bolsheviks' open hatred of imperialism and colonial oppression, including their demand for the independence of oppressed colonies, attracted many black intellectuals, especially those from the Caribbean. One of the more famous of the "New Negroes" to be attracted to Bolshevism was Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay, who had been active around Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers Socialist Federation in London. Another example is the Harlem-based radical black nationalist African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). While such black radicals were attracted to Communism, to Bolshevism, they were not attracted to the early Communist Party in the United States, which had almost nothing to say about black oppression.

The Comintern's intervention and forceful insistence on the need to fight for black liberation enabled the CP to recruit most of the leadership of the ABB. Recruiting the ABB gave the Communists a real foothold in Harlem and a base to recruit black workers and intellectuals throughout the North. Without Comintern intervention, it is likely that the ABB never would have joined the Communists. As my book explains, in the late 1920s the particular analysis that the CP brought to the question—the so-called Black Belt theory—was flawed, but during the following decade, the Communists became known for being in the forefront of the fight against black oppression.

The Farmer-Labor Question, La Follette and Class Independence

What I want to discuss next is the issue of the Farmer-Labor Party. In the United States, unlike much of Europe, the working class traditionally has supported one or another bourgeois party—either the Democrats or the Republicans. In fact, Samuel Gompers and the rest of the American Federation of Labor bureaucracy opposed organizing a working-class party.

Obviously, as I mentioned, there was the Socialist Party in this period, and Socialists had been elected as mayors in several cities, often focusing on municipal reforms. For example, Victor Berger, the supporter of Jim Crow socialism, was elected in Milwaukee because he promised to fix the sewers there. Thus, this municipal reformism is called sewer socialism. And I believe that he did fix the sewers. But the SP was never seen as a threat to the power of the two bourgeois parties in a national sense.

After World War I, amid a brief upturn in class struggle, some trade-union leaders—especially in Chicago, the industrial center of the country—advocated the formation of a labor party, largely influenced by the British Labour Party. The British Labour Party, like the German Social

Library of Congress

Minnesota Historical Society

Comintern insisted that U.S. Communist Party maintain proletarian class independence rather than tail two-class Farmer-Labor Party and bourgeois-populist Robert La Follette (above left), presidential candidate for Progressive Party, 1924.

The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919–1929
by Jacob A. Zumoff
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Democratic Party, was what can be called a bourgeois labor party or a bourgeois workers party—it had a working-class base but a bourgeois program and leadership. Such parties represent in the political arena the division of society between workers and capitalists, albeit in a crude way. In the United States, the formation of a labor party would have represented an advance in the consciousness of the working class.

Focused on their belief that revolution was near, the early Communists were hostile to this labor party movement. Americanizers such as James P. Cannon, as well as the Comintern, fought to get the CP to intervene into this movement in order to polarize it between revolutionaries and reformists. But by the time the American Communists as a whole began to pay attention in 1922, the labor party movement had changed. It had become a *farmer*-labor party in an attempt to attract agrarian radicals. Thus, it became a two-class party, one that claimed to be based on both the working class and small farmers, that is, a section of the petty bourgeoisie. So, rather than increase class consciousness among workers, this concept weakened it.

A Leninist intervention into the farmer-labor movement would have drawn a clear *class* line and fought for a working-class party, separate from bourgeois reformers and not subordinate to farmers. Instead, American Communists tried to get rich quick through a series of organizational maneuvers. They formed their own Federated Farmer-Labor Party, splitting with their former allies in the trade-union movement. The new party was based on the same two-class program; the only difference was that the Communists were in control. This move was adventurist—it was based on the idea that there was going to be a massive upsurge in agrarian radicalism. It was also opportunist—it jettisoned sections of the Communist program, sometimes explicitly, for example dropping opposition to Jim Crow segregation. At the same time it was sectarian—it alienated a huge section of the trade-union bureaucracy, not on the basis of politics but on tactics. It backfired—the trade-union bureaucracy, including many bureaucrats who had previously tended to be sympathetic, went on a witchhunt and purged Communists from the unions.

The section of the Communist leadership with the most experience in the trade unions—Cannon and William Z. Foster—thought that this maneuver was folly. And this dispute was the beginning of a long-lasting factional division in the party, with C.E. Ruthenberg on one side and Cannon and Foster on the other. Now, added into the mix was one of the most colorful characters in American Communist history, somebody who went by the name of John Pepper. I won't be able to give justice to him. He was a native of Hungary and his given name was Józef Pogány. He played a key role in leading the 1919 Hungarian Revolution to defeat and his second act was helping to organize the disastrous "March Action" in Germany in 1921. By then he had thoroughly alienated his higher-ups in Moscow, who sent him to the United States.

From what I was able to determine, Pepper was sent to America to work with the Hungarian language federation, a medium-sized language federation. One of its largest locals was in Passaic, New Jersey. His actual assignment, I think, was to edit their newspaper. But he was able to pass himself off as an official emissary from the Comintern, got himself elected to the Central Committee and quickly became not only the intellectual leader of the Ruthenberg group, but soon of the party as a whole. Keep in mind that he didn't speak English when he first came here. The fact that he was able to do all of this speaks to the importance and the esteem that American Communists placed in the Comintern. It also speaks to the theoretical weakness of the early American Communist movement.

Pepper was the most enthusiastic supporter of the farmer-labor perspective. And one of his genuine skills, I suppose, was the ability to make a betrayal of Marxism—tying the proletarian vanguard to the petty-bourgeoisie through a two-class party—seem like the pinnacle of Bolshevism.

RGASPI

Jean Weinberg

Left: James P. Cannon with Red Army soldiers at time of 1928 Sixth Comintern Congress, where he was won to Trotskyism. Cannon was expelled from Communist Party for supporting Leon Trotsky (right) in fight for genuine communism against Stalinism.

With the 1924 presidential elections approaching, the broader farmer-labor movement was soon eclipsed by enthusiasm for longtime Wisconsin Republican Senator Robert La Follette. The same people who, a year earlier, had supported the farmer-labor party were now supporting La Follette. In a broad sense, this wasn't really a contradiction, since the farmer-labor movement was essentially an attempt to engage in bourgeois pressure politics. There was quite a lot of angst about the fact that there was tremendous corruption and that big business was obviously running the government.

La Follette was an anti-Communist; he did not even want to form a new capitalist party, but sought merely to pressure the two main parties. This should have served as a warning for Communists of the danger of not insisting on the political independence of the working class. Instead, led by Pepper, the Communists were drawn closer into La Follette's orbit. Pepper hailed what he called the "La Follette revolution," which, he wrote, would comprise "elements of the great French Revolution, and the Russian Kerensky Revolution." He expanded: "In its ideology it will have elements of Jeffersonianism, Danish cooperatives, Ku Klux Klan and Bolshevism" but he did concede, "The proletariat *as a class* will not play an independent role in this revolution." He advocated "support to the La Follette revolution at the same time criticizing and fighting for a Communist mass party."

Labor Defender

Comintern was crucial in orienting American Communists to combat black oppression. In 1930s, Communist Party played key role in campaign that saved the Scottsboro Nine from legal lynching.

Pepper came up with what he called the "theory of two splits." First, the nascent third-party movement would split the petty bourgeoisie from the big capitalists, and then the Communists would split the proletariat from the petty bourgeoisie. This would have been political suicide for the Communist Party. It would have meant liquidating the party into the reformist swamp, politically undoing the whole 1919 split of the Communists from the reformist betrayers of socialism. In fact, the Socialist Party essentially did liquidate into the La Follette movement and didn't run a candidate.

In 1924, in Moscow, there was a special American Commission to debate this issue. This commission comprised very important Comintern leaders: Zinoviev, Radek, Lozovsky (who was a key Stalin supporter), Trotsky and Kamenev. This heavy-duty commission was convened because, unknown to most of the American leaders, the La Follette debate intersected a major struggle in the Bolshevik Party. Stalin, then allied with Zinoviev, was seeking to consolidate his power, based on the growing Soviet bureaucracy, within the Russian party after Lenin's death. As part of this struggle, the Stalin faction resurrected the Menshevik idea that socialists should systematically collaborate with non-working-class forces.

Trotsky, who by this time was in opposition to much of the leadership of the Russian party, opposed the La Follette maneuver as a betrayal. He warned: "For a young and weak Communist Party, lacking in revolutionary temper, to play the role of solicitor and gatherer of 'progressive' votes for the Republican Senator La Follette is to head toward the political dissolution of the party in the petty bourgeoisie."

Although the "triumvirate" of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin was in a position of strength, they still felt compelled to concede to Trotsky. Thus, the Comintern instructed the American party to break with the La Follette movement, to denounce him and to stand its own candidate. The party ran Foster for president in 1924. He did not receive many votes, but he drew a hard class line between the Communists and bourgeois populism.

The Comintern's intervention confused many American Communists. It came very late in the day and caused the Communists to pivot on a dime, rather clumsily. But it underscores how important the Comintern was at this point in guiding American Communism *politically* in maintaining the principle of working-class independence. Without the Comintern's intervention, the party would have become a tail on hourgeois electoral formations (something that has happened quite frequently to sections of the left in subsequent decades).

Stalinist Degeneration

I want to talk now about the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern and of the Communist movement. By 1924, there had been a political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, as a bureaucratic caste headed by Stalin came to power. After January 1924, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled, and the purposes for which the USSR were ruled had all changed. The ideological expression of this was so-called "socialism in one country," the idea that it was possible to build socialism (a society of material abundance based on the highest level of productive technology and an international division of labor) in a backward, largely peasant, country surrounded by hostile imperialist powers. Trotsky, right up through his exile in the late 1920s and his assassination in 1940 by a Stalinist agent, waged a battle, as uncompromising as any waged by Lenin, to reforge a communist vanguard and to oppose the Stalinists while at the same time standing for unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution.

The degeneration of the Soviet workers state and the Bolshevik Party was reflected in the Comintern and the rest of the international Communist movement. This was certainly true in the American CP and I describe the process in several chapters in my book. Today, I want to touch on only a few points. First, the significance of the Stalinist degeneration was not immediately clear to most Communists, especially those far away from Russia. Second, the rise of Stalinism within the American CP, while reflecting the intervention of the Comintern, also reflected homegrown political problems. Finally, I want to make the point that Stalinism was *fought* in the American Communist Party.

What Stalinism represented was not clear in 1924. Many American Communists would not even have recognized Stalin, and the early stages of Stalinization were spearheaded by Zinoviev, not by Stalin. The rise of Stalinization coincided with several problems in the American party. The factionalism that had begun over the farmer-labor party was blossoming into full-fledged warfare, at times threatening the basic unity of the party. Even after Pepper had been sent back to Moscow, Ruthenberg, assisted by his lieutenant Jay Lovestone, maintained one faction; Foster, assisted by Earl Browder and others, had his faction; and Cannon had his own faction.

In the mid to late 1920s, this factionalism had become devoid of any apparent political rationale. At the same time the party was regaining some of its momentum and once again becoming a factor in the broader labor movement. So, to give two examples: in 1926-27, the party led a militant textile workers strike in Passaic, New Jersey, and in 1927 the party's International Labor Defense (led by Cannon) fought to save anarchist prisoners

continued on page 7

Hugo Pinell Assassinated

Unbroken and Unbowed Fighter for the Oppressed

Class-war prisoner Hugo Pinell was a marked man. Since the late 1960s when he emerged as a leader of the prisoners' rights movement together with his mentor and comrade, George Jackson, Pinell was on the hit list of the state and its sadistic prison guards. Brutalized and tortured, the target of repeated assassination attempts, ***Pinell was held in solitary confinement for more than 40 years.*** But he would not be broken. Despite being locked in a tiny cell for 23 hours a day, Pinell continued to struggle against the horrors of America's prisons. In 2011 and 2013 he joined thousands of other inmates in hunger strikes against the dehumanizing torture of solitary confinement. The hunger strikes were initiated by prisoners in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) at California's notorious Pelican Bay "supermax" prison where Pinell had been locked up since 1990.

In late July, Pinell, aged 71, was released into the general prison population at California State Prison-Sacramento (aka New Folsom). Two weeks later, on August 12, he was killed in the prison yard, allegedly stabbed to death by two inmates. Whoever wielded the knife it was his jailers who wanted him dead. Prison guards gloated on social media over Pinell's murder while the capitalist rulers' hired pens and media mouthpieces slandered him as a "notorious killer."

Pinell was the last member of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. The six were framed up on charges stemming from the prison upheaval sparked by the assassination of Black Panther Party member George Jackson by guards in August 1971. In a statement honoring their fallen comrade Pinell, three members of the San Quentin 6—Willie Tate, Luis Talamantez and David Johnson—wrote: "We must expose those who under the cover of law orchestrated and allowed this murderous act to take place." We stand with them in protesting Pinell's murder, seeking to expose the state forces that stand behind it and honoring his unbreakable courage and commitment to the struggle against the barbarism of the American prison system. We also share the sorrow and tremendous sense of loss felt by Pinell's mother Marina whose love preserved him, his daughter Allegra and the rest of his family.

Since 1986, Pinell, affectionately known as "Yogi Bear," was a recipient of the Partisan Defense Committee's monthly stipends to those imprisoned for fighting against the brutal class exploitation and racial oppression that define capitalist rule. Not an act of charity but of solidarity, the purpose of the PDC stipend program is to keep the cause of these prisoners alive outside the prison walls. In his greetings to the 2009 annual PDC Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, Pinell wrote:

> "In February 2010 it will be 45 years in the California Department of Corrections (CDC) on an original sentence of 18 months! My S.Q. 6 assault conviction has become a 'buried alive sentence' and, as unjust and brutal their actions, let me remain positive and reassuring over the great lessons and experiences in my journey. I came in a juvenile delinquent, a common criminal. Thanks to Beautiful People, i awakened, i have grown and transformed into a humble freedom Servant.... Your care and solidarity has provided me with extra strength and drive to keep on pushing and evolving and i hope that my company has served you well."

The killing of Hugo Pinell is a blow to all fighters against racial injustice and oppression. At the same time, his story has many lessons to carry that battle forward.

Pinell Family

Hugo Pinell with his daughter Allegra, New Folsom State Prison, August 5.

A Fighter Forged in a Prison Inferno

Born in Nicaragua, Pinell moved to the U.S. when he was 12 years old. In 1964, at just 19, he was accused of raping a white woman, a charge he always adamantly denied. Despite his innocence, Pinell's mother was pressured into believing that if he didn't plead guilty he would be sentenced to death. Promised eligibility for parole after six months of a three-year sentence, Pinell copped a plea. When he got to prison, however, he learned that his sentence was three years to life.

Amid the degradation of prison life, Pinell was introduced to the politics of the radical struggles for black rights by militant black prisoner W. L. Nolen in 1967. As Pinell wrote in a letter to a friend: "Most of us were very young, doing short sentences (supposedly), had been through the gladiator stations, Tracy and Soledad, and the time and place was right for self-change...to join the liberation movement we had to understand the meaning of liberate and, to embark, on a commitment to freedom, we had to do away with old ways, old habits, f----d up mentality, the club, homeboy set mentality and attitude."

When prison guards inflamed racial hostility between prisoners at Soledad in the summer of 1969, Nolen launched civil rights lawsuits against the warden, the California Department of Corrections and several of the guards. In January 1970, the guards orchestrated a melee between black and white prisoners in the yard. A prison guard sharpshooter in the tower gunned down Nolen and two of his comrades. Pinell was among the first to file a legal protest against the Department of Corrections for this bloodbath.

After the guard who killed Nolen and the two others was exonerated on the grounds of "justifiable homicide," prisoners erupted in outrage. A white guard was killed and George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo and John Cluchette were framed up on murder charges. Their case, which exposed the sadistic brutality directed against black prisoners, including a series of murders of militants, became widely known with the publication of George Jackson's prison letters in the book *Soledad Brother* (1970). Pinell refused an offer of early parole promised if he gave false testimony against George Jackson.

In their struggle against the racist hell of "life" inside prison, Pinell, Jackson and others reflected the mass social struggles that were taking place outside, from the Black Power movement to the protests against the Vietnam War. At the same time, their institutional concentration and extreme oppression provided a material basis for coming to understand such racial injustice from a *social* rather than individual viewpoint.

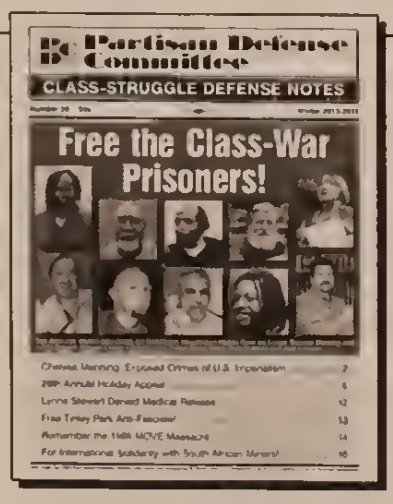
Black Panthers, war resisters and other militants provided a transmission belt for radical politics, often an eclectic mixture of Marx and Mao, Lenin and Franz Fanon, into the prisons. Young black and Latino lumpen criminals were inspired to become avowed humanitarians, freedom fighters and revolutionaries with all the contradictions that entailed. As Jackson wrote in *Soledad Brother*: "I met Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Engels and Mao when I entered prison and they redeemed me." Together with a deepening political awareness, their lives developed discipline and focus. Jackson and Pinell especially stood out for struggling to overcome the murderous racial hostilities between black and Latino prisoners fomented by the guards to maintain control. The prospect of interracial solidarity evoked particular fear and hatred from the prison masters, who struck back with a vengeance.

Amid the tumultuous social struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the prison guards and their masters did not want George Jackson to get his "day in court," fearing it could serve as a potential platform for exposing the racist depravity of their prisons. On 21 August 1971, two days before the opening of the Soledad Brothers' trial, Jackson was gunned down by guards who claimed he was trying to escape. Prisoners were enraged by Jackson's killing and a melee erupted, in which three guards and two inmate trusties were killed and three other guards wounded.

As a result, Hugo Pinell and five other inmates—the San Quentin 6—were framed up on charges of murder and conspiracy. It was the longest trial in California history, costing millions of

Reuters

Solitary cell in Pelican Bay prison's Security Housing Unit. Pinell was active in fight against torture of solitary confinement.



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dollars. The shackled prisoners were led into court leashed like animals and handcuffed to special chairs bolted to the floor. When the trial ended on 12 August 1976, Pinell and David Johnson were convicted of assault; Johnny Spain was convicted of two counts of murder.

Pinell was killed 39 years to the day after his conviction and three years to the day after the California prisoners' Agreement to End Hostilities that was coauthored by black, Latino and white inmates, a cause for which Pinell's decades of struggle were an inspiration.

Prison Guards: The "Worst of the Worst"

Revolts by prisoners against the conditions of their incarceration challenge a key institution of capitalist state repression. Thus, the multiracial 1971 Attica, New York, prison rebellion that was sparked by Jackson's murder, combined with the prospect of interracial unity exemplified by Jackson and Pinell, drove the state authorities into a murderous rage. Declaring the Attica revolt "a serious threat to the ability of a free government to preserve order," New York governor Nelson Rockefeller massacred the prisoners as mercilessly as forces hired by his grandfather had murdered striking coal miners in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914.

The same year as the Attica revolt, in the aftermath of the ghetto upheavals of the 1960s, President Richard Nixon launched a "war against crime" that was aimed at black militants and the inner city poor. Two years later, Governor Rockefeller enacted draconian drug laws which became the model for the "war on drugs" that went into high gear in the 1980s under Ronald Reagan, alongside increasing deindustrialization.

Bettmann

George Jackson, Pinell's comrade and mentor, assassinated by prison guards in August 1971.

Having created the conditions in which more and more black and Latino youth were condemned to joblessness and poverty, the rulers branded them criminal outlaws. By 2010, the prison population in the U.S. was 2.3 million, the majority black and Latino. America came to lead the world in the percentage of its population that is behind bars, with California leading the nation.

Among the biggest beneficiaries were the prison guards. In the past 30 years, the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA) has grown by a factor of six and their pay more than tripled. The most powerful lobbying force in the state, the CCPOA has poured millions into backing harsher sentencing laws and into measures to defeat attempts to alleviate prison conditions.

The murder of Hugo Pinell came while prisoners have been pursuing a class action suit against California's notorious solitary confinement torture chambers. The attention drawn to the unspeakable conditions in the SHUs by the courageous prison hunger strikers has already led to some minimal, face-saving measures. Recently some 1,000 prisoners have been released from SHUs into the general prison population. Yet two days after Pinell was assassinated, an Associated Press article proclaimed: "California's efforts to ease its famously harsh use of solitary confinement are clashing with a bloody reality after an inmate who spent decades alone in a tiny cell was sent back to the general population and killed by fellow inmates within days."

It's a win-win for the prison guards: a man they have wanted dead for decades was assassinated and his murder has the additional benefit of potentially preserving their jobs as the SHU overseers. As the *San Francisco BayView* (14 August) noted in commemorating Pinell:

> "He was no threat to other prisoners. It was the guards who loathed him and loath the Agreement to End Hostilities, which he exemplified and set in motion over 40 years ago.

Bettmann

Hugo Pinell (top center) and the rest of the San Quentin 6. Clockwise from top right: Luis Talamantez, Willie Tate, David Johnson, John Larry Spain, Fleeta Drumgo.

> "Did they have him killed to demolish the agreement, to rekindle all-out race riots? Riots are job insurance for guards."

Abolish the Prisons! For a Socialist America!

The prisons are the concentrated expression of the depravity of American capitalist society. They are a key instrument to coerce, torture and brutalize those whose lives have been deemed worthless by a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression (or who have fought against that system). It will take nothing short of proletarian socialist revolution to destroy the prisons and sweep away all the barbaric institutions of the capitalist state.

The violence and savagery of the prisons, alongside the social ferment of the time, propelled Hugo Pinell, George Jackson, W.L. Nolen and others to see their oppression as a product of the capitalist system. Even so, as prisoners, they were cut off from the one class that has the social power to eradicate this system, the multiracial working class. However heroic, the prison revolts were a desperate response to desperate conditions. Unlike the New Left and others at the time, we did not enthuse over black and Latino prisoners as the "vanguard" of revolutionary struggle.

In memory of Hugo Pinell, we reiterate what we wrote in "Massacre at Attica," on the front page of the first issue of *Workers Vanguard* (October 1971):

> "We support the most militant struggle against the state. We only seek to give that struggle the strategic perspectives that will lead to the workers conquering political power....
>
> "The heroic Attica martyrs and George Jackson will long be remembered for their courageous stand against overwhelming odds. It is not the crimes (real or alleged) for which the prisoners were jailed, but the stand they took—rising far above capitalist-imposed ignorance, poverty, brutality and frame-up—for justice and against oppression, that the world's working people will remember."

The black, Latino and white cadre of a future revolutionary workers party will learn from and honor Pinell's legacy. Under the leadership of such a party, the social power of the multiracial working class will be mobilized in the fight for the liberation of all the oppressed and for a workers America, putting the tremendous wealth now held by the tiny class of capitalist exploiters at the service of the many. When the workers rule here and internationally they will begin to lay the material basis for an egalitarian communist society where there will be no need for an apparatus of state repression. The modern instruments of incarceration, torture and death will be placed alongside their medieval complements as relics of a decaying social order that deserved to perish. ■

Book Launch...

(continued from page 5)

Sacco and Vanzetti from execution. In the upshot, neither campaign succeeded, but they did demonstrate the militancy and determination of the CP and brought it a wider audience and support among the broader labor movement.

The rise of Stalinization was wrapped up in this situation. Given the factionalism, it became increasingly clear that the American Communist Party could not resolve its problems on its own. Naturally, leading Communists looked to the Comintern—none more so than Cannon, who prided himself on being what he called a Cominternist. I want to defend Cannon here for a moment because many leftists, such as the International Socialist Organization's Joel Geier, attack Cannon as some kind of bootlicker for the Comintern. Cannon's problem was not that he looked to the Comintern to help the American Communist Party. In fact, the Comintern had done this in the past. Rather, Cannon did not understand that with the degeneration of the Soviet workers state, the Comintern was no longer the same, that the Comintern leadership was Stalinist, not Leninist.

In the mid and late 1920s, the Comintern *did* intervene. But it did so not to build a genuine Leninist party, but to create a pliable leadership that would support Stalin. It played each faction off against the others in a cynical game, and each faction courted the Comintern, trying to prove its loyalty. By the end of the decade, the Comintern was essentially picking the party's leadership. First, the Comintern put control of the party in the hands of Ruthenberg and Lovestone, who became the head of Ruthenberg's old faction after Ruthenberg died. Then, when Lovestone became too bothersome for even Stalin, the Comintern put the leadership in the hands of Earl Browder, who was in Foster's faction.

There is also a tendency by many leftists to lay all the blame for the degeneration of the CP at the feet of Moscow—see Dan La Botz's references to so-called Moscow domination. While Moscow definitely played a key role, not everything came from the Comintern—the pressures of American imperialism contributed to many early Communists giving up on their original goal. For example, the La Follette fiasco, notwithstanding the help from Pepper, was thought up by American Communists. And in fact, in much of the 1930s and 1940s, by which time the Communist Party had become Stalinist, there were many similarities between American social democracy and American Stalinism: both supported President Roosevelt's New Deal, both allied the trade-union bureaucrats in the CIO, and, by and large, both became enthusiastic supporters of U.S. imperialism in the Second World War.

Besides creating a compliant leadership, the Stalinized Comintern's main contribution to this process was the ideology of socialism in one country, which was a betrayal of the Comintern's original proletarian internationalism. This gave a political cover to the anti-revolutionary impulses of much of the American party's leadership: if the main goal of the international Communist movement was to protect the Soviet bureaucracy, then revolution in the United States was no longer necessary. By the late 1930s, the CP had essentially become a tool to pressure the Democratic Party.

The final point I want to make about the Stalinist degeneration in the American party is that it was neither inevitable nor uncontested. Much of the leadership of the American party did accept Stalinism. This reflected, as I mentioned, the pressures of the period, the organizational maneuvers of the Comintern and also, to a large degree, Stalin's false claim to the heritage of Bolshevism. However, just as in Soviet Russia and the Comintern as a whole, Stalinism required a break with Leninism. The one key CP leader who fought this break was Cannon. Precisely because Cannon had looked to the Comintern for Leninist guidance, not just as a source of factional power, he sensed that there was something different about it in the late 1920s than in the earlier period.

In 1928, he was sent as a delegate to the Sixth Comintern Congress. He was not particularly enthusiastic about this assignment, even though his faction seemed to be on the verge of obtaining power in the party. While in Moscow, he managed to read Trotsky's criticism of the Stalinist degeneration of the Comintern, which was later published as *The Third International After Lenin*. This critique gave a systematic political explanation for Cannon's dissatisfaction and won him to support Trotsky's Left Opposition. Cannon was expelled from the CP for his support to Trotsky and went on to found the Trotskyist Communist League of America. He saw the fight to forge a Trotskyist party as the continuation of his struggle for communism in the United States and internationally.

This history is beyond the scope of my book, which ends in 1929. But it does illuminate the point that I want to end on. As I mentioned, one of Theodore Draper's strengths as a historian was that he sought out all the early Communists he could find. Many of them were still alive when he was writing in the 1950s, although many had broken with the Communist Party one way or another over the intervening decades. He noted that Cannon's memories were always the most vivid, and, when he compared what Cannon remembered to the documentary record, they were the most accurate. The reason for this, Draper concluded, was not that Cannon had some kind of superhuman memory, but that he *wanted* to remember these early years.

That was because in the 1950s Cannon, unlike most of his former comrades, still wanted the same thing he had wanted in the 1920s: to build a revolutionary party capable of leading the American workers to power, part of building socialism internationally. Thus, Cannon understood that the lessons of the first attempt to build such a party in the United States, the CP in the 1920s, were absolutely vital. That is also the main reason motivating my own research: to make available the lessons of the early American Communist movement, not only—and not mainly—to academic historians, but to those who endeavor to build a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist party today. ■

Black Freedom...

(continued from page 1)

prop for capitalist rule and profits. The forcible segregation of black people serves to divide the working class and suppress wages for black, white and immigrant workers alike. The horrific conditions of life—rotten schools and dilapidated housing, widespread unemployment and low-wage jobs, no health care—that blacks and immigrant workers have long endured are now increasingly faced by the working class as a whole. This reality exposes the lie that white workers materially benefit from the oppression of their class brothers and sisters. The unemployed white crystal meth addict in the Ozarks, whose father and grandfather haven't had a regular job in decades, likely recognizes he isn't very privileged. In fact, his perceived lack of privilege is soil for recruitment to the fascist race terrorists.

It used to be very fashionable to view the U.S. through the same lens as South Africa. A comparison with apartheid South Africa, whose development produced a near-complete overlap between class and race, is instructive. Practically the entire industrial proletariat of that country consists of black Africans, with some coloureds in the Western Cape and Indians in Durban. After 1948, what had been a sizable and privileged white working class, along with poor white Afrikaner farmers, was concentrated in the state bureaucracy. By the mid 1990s, one-third of the white labor force was employed in the government sector, mainly as useless pencil pushers. They enjoyed lives comparable to the upper layer of the American petty bourgeois—owning plush suburban homes, with swimming pools and household servants.

This strict racial hierarchy is not the case in the U.S. While blacks are on the bottom of society, whites as a whole are not on top. Millions of white women and children are on welfare (even after many were thrown off the rolls under Bill Clinton's welfare "reform"), lack medical coverage and survive on food stamps. The large number of poor whites would be inconceivable in South Africa.

What black people have suffered for generations, continuing to this day, is defined by the particulars of U.S. history—slavery, the defeat of the Southern slavocracy by Northern industrial capitalism in the Civil War, and the bourgeoisie's betrayal of Radical Reconstruction and its promise of equality. This history led to the racist segregation of black people despite the economic integration of black toilers into the proletariat at the bottom.

Getty

Beaten, gassed and jailed during 64-day strike in Memphis in 1968, sanitation workers protest racist contempt for black people while successfully fighting for union recognition and improved wages.

Race and Class in America

The racist contempt that is deeply embedded in American culture is rubbed in the face of the black population on a daily basis. It's not just stop-and-frisk and physical abuse by the police for "walking while black"; the "zero tolerance" rules under which black children as young as five years old have been arrested for acting out a bit in school; the rotting public housing and the redlining to assure residential segregation. It is also expressed in the hideous demands recently made on the families of the victims of cop terror to forgive the killers. Forgive?! This from a ruling class whose Supreme Court has declared capital punishment—a legacy of slavery—to be one of the "principles that underlie the entire criminal justice system," and that locks away fighters for black rights such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, Mondo we Langa, Ed Poindexter and Albert Woodfox, among many others framed up for crimes they never committed. Some have been kept in solitary for decades.

The pro-slavery, pro-KKK movie *Gone with the Wind* is still revered as a classic, even by liberals who would soil their pants if a German film festival featured the Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*. "Classic rock" radio DJs wax on about their "peace and love" Woodstock experiences and then play Lynyrd Skynyrd's segregationist anthem "Sweet Home Alabama." The same contempt is seen in the Confederate flags that continue to adorn fairgrounds in New York State. It is also expressed in the vitriol directed at some of the greatest athletes of our time—foremost among them Barry Bonds, whose alleged use of performance-enhancing drugs is portrayed as violating the hogus ideal of American society as a meritocracy. Bonds and others are reviled by the same people who fawn so much over the parasitic British royal family (whose only accomplishment was to be born intact despite generations of inbreeding) that when Prince William's wife sneezes they might as well tweet across the ocean "God Bless You Kate."

Racism infects the working class precisely because the rulers of this country devised the myth of black inferiority to justify slavery and then propagated and constantly reinforce race prejudice to divide the laboring masses. As a result, the U.S. is the only advanced capitalist country never to have had a mass workers party representing even a deformed expression of the political independence of the proletariat. Writing in 1893 to a comrade in Hoboken, New Jersey, Karl Marx's collaborator Friedrich Engels counted among the obstacles to forging such a party "especially, immigration, which divides the workers into two groups: the native-born and the foreigners...who understand only their own language. And in addition the Negroes. Very powerful incentives are needed to form a single party out of these elements. There is sometimes a sudden strong *élan*, but the bourgeoisie need only wait passively, and the dissimilar elements of the working class will fall apart again."

Wait passively is not what the American bourgeoisie does. The last 125 years have seen heroic integrated struggles—including the pitched battles in the 1930s that forged the CIO industrial unions, the greatest gain for black people since the Civil War and Reconstruction. At the same time, the bourgeoisie has undermined those struggles by pitting blacks, whites and immigrants against one another over scarce jobs and other resources. This divide-and-rule has resulted in atrocities—like the racist pogroms amid the massive strike wave of 1919 and the Detroit racist riot of 1943 over public housing.

Black and Red

"White skin privilege," as propounded by Ignatin in his 1967 letter "White Blindspot" to the Progressive Labor Party and adopted by a current of the New Left, emerged in a particular historical context, the same as the ghetto conflagrations mentioned earlier: defeat of the liberal-led civil rights movement headed by MLK as it moved North. This defeat accelerated black separatist sentiment. The purge of leftists from the unions in the late 1940s and '50s meant there was no significant left opposition in the labor movement to challenge the racist practices of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and fight racial oppression in society at large. One other factor was the absence of any revolutionary Marxist organization that intervened early in the civil rights movement before young black activists turned to black nationalism.

It was in the period of the civil rights movement that our organization emerged, originating as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) opposition within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the historic party of Trotskyism in the U.S. By the early 1960s, the SWP had lost its revolutionary bearings and was tailing non-proletarian class forces, seen domestically in its policy of abstention from the Southern civil rights movement as well as its later embrace of black nationalism.

By 1963, the SWP majority had explicitly renounced the fight for communist leadership of the black struggle, relegating itself to the role of a "socialist" vanguard of the white working class. Before its expulsion beginning in December that year, the RT fought inside the SWP for the party to seize the opportunity to recruit black Trotskyist cadre to its ranks. The RT put forward a series of demands linking the fight for black rights to the broader struggles of the working class and addressing immediate needs, such as organized self-defense and unionization drives throughout the South.

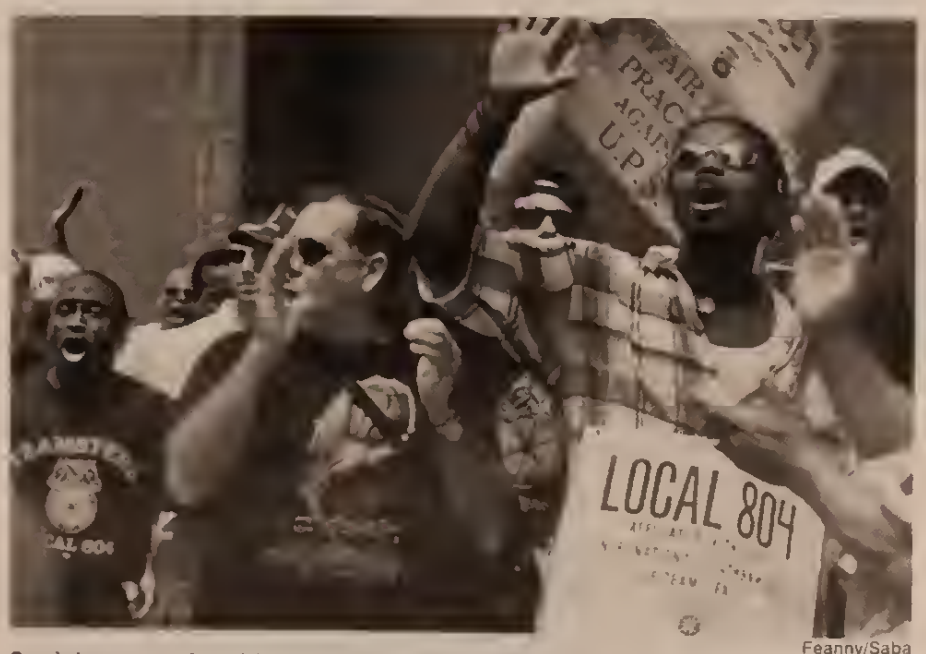
As we elaborated in "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom," adopted at the founding conference of the Spartacist League/U.S. in 1966:

> "Because of the generations of exceptional oppression, degradation and humiliation, Black people as a group have special needs necessitating additional and special forms of struggle. It is this part of the struggle which has begun today, and from which the most active and militant sections of Black people will gain a deep education and experience in the lessons of struggle. Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution."

A Materialist Understanding of Society

The purpose of this talk is to motivate a Marxist materialist program for the fight for black freedom as opposed to the idealism embodied in both black nationalism and guilty white liberalism, including the concept of "white skin privilege," which falsely substitutes individual psychology for struggle against the racial oppression rooted in the capitalist profit system. We fight for black freedom on the program of revolutionary integration including mobilizing the working class against every manifestation of racial oppression. This approach is counterposed to liberal integration, which is premised on the utopian notion that equality for black people can be attained within the confines of this class society founded on black oppression.

Our program of revolutionary integrationism flows from the understanding that the American black population is neither a separate nation nor a separate class but rather is a doubly oppressed race-color caste. Freedom for blacks in the U.S. will not come about without a socialist revolution. And there will be no



Feanny/Saba

Social power of multiracial proletariat: Teamsters demonstrate outside UPS headquarters in Manhattan during solid 1997 strike.

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socialist revolution without the working class taking up the fight for black freedom. As Karl Marx wrote shortly after the Civil War, "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded."

As Marxists, we view the motor force of history as the struggle between the oppressor class—today the capitalist class, which owns the means of production like land and factories—and the oppressed class. Under capitalism, that class is the proletariat, workers who have nothing but their labor power, which they sell to the capitalists in order to live. Capitalism is an irrational system based on production for private profit. It is incapable of providing for the needs of the world's masses.

To preserve its class rule, the tiny capitalist class has at its disposal the vast powers of the state—the core of which is the army, cops, courts and prisons—as well as potent means of ideological subjugation in the schools, press and religion. The police truncheon, machine-gun fire, electric chair and firing squad have been the rulers' rations for both white and black workers seeking to organize for their class interests. The capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. It must be swept away by the proletariat and a workers government established in its place.

The proletariat is the only revolutionary class in society. This isn't a moral question—i.e., exploitation and oppression do not make you more virtuous or progressive. Rather, it is a consequence of the proletariat's unique role in capitalist production (and transport). Workers, toiling alongside one another in large numbers, generate the profits that go to the capitalists. It is because of this role in production that the working class has its social power. Indigenous peasants in southern Mexico may have harder lives, but they don't have the social power or collective interest that the workers have in auto factories in that country's north. Similarly, black people who left farms in the U.S. South for factories in urban centers found a potential social power that they could only have dreamed of before, along with a commonality of interest with their white co-workers. Shutting down production and transport through strikes and solidarity actions—these are the proletariat's weapons in the class struggle.

Integral to capitalist production and class rule is ensuring that some part of the working class be unemployed—what Marx called an "industrial reserve army." This "surplus population" is needed in order for capitalist production to expand during periods of boom and to hold down wages through competition for jobs. It also provides a pool from which to recruit strikebreakers and union-busters. Prior to the end of slavery, the U.S. recruited its surplus population from immigrants driven off their land in Ireland by famine; later, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as Asia played this role. Emancipation of the black slaves gave the American bourgeoisie a new, domestic source for its industrial reserve army, one that became increasingly important in the late 19th century, as U.S. capitalism entered the epoch of imperialism. From then to now, black people have been the last hired and first fired.

Hulton

Los Angeles, 1965: State terror against black people during Watts ghetto explosion.

Black People in the U.S.: A Caste, Not a Nation

In much of the world, the consolidation of capitalist nation-states by a nationally homogeneous ruling class was accompanied by the forced incorporation of other peoples, some constituting a nation and others not. Those making up oppressed nations are subject not only to greater terrorization and discrimination in employment and housing but also to the suppression of the national culture—language, schools, religion. For example, Turkey long denied the existence of the Kurds, calling them mountain Turks, forcing them to adopt Turkish names and prohibiting the use of the Kurdish language.

Tsarist Russia was a prison house of peoples encompassing oppressed nations (like Poland and Ukraine). At the same time, there were non-national groups who were brutally oppressed: religious minorities, Jews, Turkic speaking peoples, etc. The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the working class to power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution, proclaimed the right of nations to self-determination. Their irreconcilable opposition to anti-Jewish bigotry and pogroms, discrimination against Roma (Gypsies) and all national, religious and ethnic oppression was instrumental to uniting the working class, with the support of the peasantry, to smash capitalist rule and maintain proletarian state power in a civil war against reactionary forces backed up by 14 invading capitalist armies.

The Bolshevik Party is our model. As Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902):

> "The Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

The Russian Revolution was not made solely for Russia, but was considered the opening shot of a necessarily international struggle of labor against the rule of capital. It was an inspiration to the oppressed masses of the world and had a direct impact on the struggle of black people in the U.S. The intervention by the Communist International in the 1920s turned the attention of the American Communists to the necessity of conducting special work among the oppressed black population—a sharp break from the practice of the earlier socialist movement. (On that topic, I highly recommend the new book by Jacob Zumoff, *The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929* [see article, page 4].)

"Self-determination" is not an all-inclusive term applicable to the various oppressed sectors of the population: e.g., self-determination for gays, women, immigrants and so on. As Lenin described, self-determination is a democratic demand applying to oppressed nations that "means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state."

As should be clear from the above, the American bourgeoisie didn't invent the strategy of dividing the working class by national origin, religion and ethnicity. Race, however, is purely a social construct developed to justify the use of black Africans as slaves in the Americas. The oppression black people face in the U.S. is *not* the forcible assimilation of an oppressed nation, but rather is *forced segregation*. In contrast to the successive waves of immigrants who were met with ruthless discrimination only to later be welcomed into what's called the American "melting pot," black people have been deprived of the right of assimilation. The historic struggles of black people in the U.S. have been for immediate economic, political and social equality—*not* for an independent state. For good reason.

Black people do not share a common territory with which to form an independent state. In 1928, the Communist Party adopted the view that the states in the Deep South Cotton Belt formed the basis for a black nation, a notion adopted by the Maoists and some black nationalist groups in the 1960s. Max Shachtman, then a leader of the American Trotskyists, noted in his 1933 document *Communism and the Negro* (published in 2003 as *Race and Revolution*) that although the Cotton Belt once held the majority of black people, they had no particular attachment to it, as shown by the Great Migration to the North. Shachtman wrote, "A common territory the Negroes have, but it is the United States as a whole and not any section of it." He added: "The Negro cannot be said to constitute a national question within the Black Belt and something else outside of it without making a caricature and a sport out of the conception of a people as a nation."

Black people in the U.S. comprise a race-color caste, integrated into the lower rungs of the economy while socially segregated. What determines their caste status is skin color. All black people—from unemployed workers to a distinguished Harvard professor—face discrimination based on the color of their skin. Black workers face double oppression—exploitation as a worker and racial discrimination. And black women workers are triply oppressed.

The Social Construct of Race

There is no biological basis for dividing humans into separate races. The race concept itself arose out of the need to demarcate black people as slaves and accordingly keep them separate from the rest of society. As veteran American Trotskyist Richard Fraser described at the onset of the civil rights movement:

> "First the black skin was despised because it was the mark of a despised mode of production. But this despised mode of production was the creator of untold wealth and prosperity, and capitalist society cannot despise riches for long. So they turned the whole matter on its head....

continued on page 10

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Black Freedom...

(continued from page 9)

> "It was not the mode of slave production which was to be despised, but the slave: that the reason the black skin was the mark of the slave was that it was first the mark of human inferiority."

This white-supremacist ideology contaminated not only lower-class whites in the South but also the emerging proletariat in the North. Before the Civil War, the Democratic Party, then dominated by the Southern slavocracy, gained support among the Irish Catholic immigrants who made up the bulk of unskilled urban workers in the North. The Democrats combined a posture of hostility toward the Yankee ruling elite with racist demagogy that abolition would result in black freedmen taking white workers' jobs and driving down wages.

Despite pervasive racist attitudes among all social classes in the North, the compelling historic interests of Northern capital led to a war against the Southern slavocracy. The Civil War was the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution, resulting in the abolition of black chattel slavery and the destruction of the old Southern plantation agricultural system. There followed a turbulent decade of interracial bourgeois democracy in the South implemented by freed slaves and their white allies and protected by federal troops, many of them black. This period, known as Radical Reconstruction, was the most egalitarian experiment in U.S. history.

The Compromise of 1877 sealed the betrayal of black freedom by the Northern capitalists. With the withdrawal of the Union Army from the South, a new system of racist oppression was established through the systematic repression of the freedmen's fight for land, education and civil rights. The former slaves became tenants and sharecroppers, toiling on land owned by the white propertied class, which consisted of elements of the former slavocracy and a new Southern bourgeoisie with strong ties to Northern capital.

Harper's Weekly

1868 election rally of former slaves in South during post-Civil War Reconstruction, the most democratic period in U.S. history.

As Fraser observed:

> "In the southern system and the race relations which derive from it, all Negroes are the victims of discrimination. But except for a minority of capitalists and privileged middle class people, the white population as such does not derive benefit from it. On the contrary, the white worker and farmer are as much the objects of class exploitation as are the Negroes. A majority of the workers and farmers in the South are white. But their standard of living and general social condition is directly determined by that of the Negroes.
>
> "Therefore, while the dark race is the direct victim of discrimination, the group which gains from it is not the lighter skinned race but a class: the ruling capitalist class of the United States."

Fraser added, "Race prejudice...is one of the means by which the extreme exploitation of white workers themselves is maintained."

In the late 1800s, the Populist movement was initially multiracial, encompassing poor white and black farmers as well as small businessmen. The heroic efforts of its organizers in the South were defeated when an alliance of big planters, Southern capitalists and Northern financial interests initiated a campaign of violent race hatred, carried out by local Democratic Party enforcers, which destroyed the developing black-white unity. Black people were disenfranchised, stripped of all legal rights and denied access to adequate education. The racism stoked during this period has had an ongoing impact on the South, where wages are far below the rest of the country, effective union organization is lacking and rural poverty crushes black and white alike.

A rigid system of legally enforced racial segregation called Jim Crow was imposed and maintained by lynch-rope terror and police-state repression of blacks and anti-racist whites. The rise of Jim Crow, which was law in the South but whose white-supremacist and segregationist spirit infected the whole country, dovetailed with the emergence of the U.S. as an imperialist power and served to fortify colonial oppression and exploitation. In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld "separate but equal" segregation in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

This remained the law of the land until the civil rights movement led the U.S. ruling class to acquiesce to granting the same political and legal rights that existed in the North to black people in the South. But even in the North, black people faced pervasive racist oppression. Two weeks after enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, protests against the cop killing of 15-year-old James Powell in Harlem were met with a full-scale police riot. Within days of the enactment of the Voting Rights Act the following summer, the Watts ghetto in Los Angeles exploded after the arrest of a black motorist. MLK fully supported the brutal suppression of the enraged populace of Watts, declaring: "It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them."

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Jersey Docks...

(continued from page 12)

accident ascribed to mechanical failure. With 24-hour operation, the port bosses care more about keeping the equipment in use than about safety inspections and preventative maintenance.

For the shipping companies—not least at the APM terminal, which is owned by Maersk, the world's largest shipping conglomerate—injuries and the loss of life are simply collateral damage in pursuit of higher profits. This expresses the brutal reality of the relationship between the working class and the capitalist class: workers, even relatively better-paid ones, sell their labor power to survive; capitalists, who own the means of production, extract their profits from workers' labor. How much profit the bosses extract from the workers under capitalism is determined by the struggle between labor and capital. In addition to limiting wages, the bosses seek a longer and more labor-intensive workday to boost profits. The union is supposed to be a basic defense organization of the workers to fight not only for higher pay and benefits, but also for better working conditions. Especially in industry and transport, it is safety that provides a direct measure of a union's strength.

In this regard, the ILA leadership evades its own responsibility for enforcing safety standards against the bosses, while instead blaming the victim. In a Facebook statement mourning the death of Judy Jones, the ILA wrote that ILAers "will, in her memory, redouble their efforts to use only safe and designated walkways whenever they find themselves involved in pedestrian activities at any marine terminal." ***But there were no "safe ond designoted walkways" at APM!*** The top loader driver has recently been charged with DUI. Blaming both the victim and the driver serves to divert attention from the company's culpability.

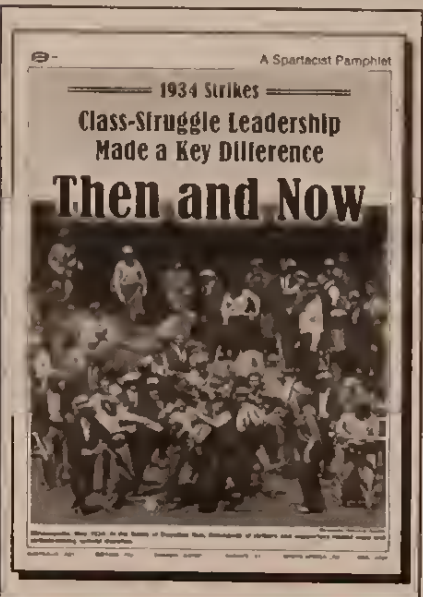
Blaming the workers is standard for the bosses. But the union tops also place the responsibility for safety on *individual members* who are under tremendous pressure from the company to "get the job done" without delays. Workers are in a Catch-22 situation: facing company retribution if they flag too many safety issues, while facing company discipline and courting disaster if safety considerations are ignored. What is needed is to mobilize the *collective strength* of the union to enforce safety.

The push for increased productivity is felt by dock workers across the country, but working conditions are not quite as onerous on the West Coast. International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) bureaucrats are not fundamentally different from their ILA counterparts in failing to actively enforce safety, but the legacy of the 1934 West Coast maritime strike and San Francisco general strike is still a living heritage despite the many givebacks by the ILWU tops over the decades. The 1934 strike was won by mobilizing the mass strength and solidarity of longshoremen, seamen, teamsters and others in opposition to the forces of the capitalist class enemy. (For more on the 1934 strikes, see our new pamphlet, *Then and Now*.)

The main gain of the 1934 strike was that the union got control of the hiring hall, giving the union power over job allocation. The union hiring hall means employers cannot arbitrarily victimize or blackball workers for refusing to work under unsafe conditions. In disputes over safety, individual ILWU members covered by the master longshore contract have the *contractual* right to "stand by" (stop work) until a union rep arrives and the issue is resolved. They also work an eight-hour shift with a maximum of two hours overtime possible (but only if the ship is scheduled to sail at the end of the shift).

The ILWU and ILA both ultimately rely on joint company-union safety committees and arbitrators to adjudicate safety issues. But safe working conditions require constant vigilance and struggle *against* the employers. Longshoremen need their own *union* safety committees with representatives that have the authority to *shut down unsafe work on the spot*. Excessive overtime, which causes fatigue and accidents, is encouraged by ILA tops. British labour eight-hour-day advocates used to say: "Accidents come in the eleventh hour." ILA higher-ups function like labor brokers in that union dues are based on a percentage of the income of each longshoreman, so premium overtime pay greatly increases the dues base.

Workers need a union leadership that understands that the interests of the workers and employers are directly counterposed and mobilizes the power of the union accordingly. Strong class-struggle unions are a necessary counterweight to the capitalist employers. But such self-defense can win only temporary victories as long as society remains organized for profit, in the hands of the capitalists. When workers take state power in their own hands, then worker safety, not profit, will govern the conditions in which industry operates. ■



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Corbyn...

(continued from page 12)

a Marxist. Yet his campaign represents a working-class-based opposition to the rightist Blairite wing of the party that currently leads it. An August 12 leaflet issued by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain (reprinted below) welcomes the Corbyn campaign, noting that it addresses issues that are in the interests of working people. At the same time, while the campaign's chief demands are supportable, the fundamental issues facing the exploited and oppressed cannot be solved within the framework of Corbyn's old Labour parliamentary reformism, which has always upheld the capitalist system.

The Labour Party was formed at the beginning of the 20th century by the trade-union bureaucracy in order to gain a voice in Parliament. The old Labour Party exemplified what Russian Revolution leader V.I. Lenin termed a bourgeois workers party, having a working-class base saddled with a pro-capitalist leadership and programme. What defined it as such was the party's organic links to the trade unions. The unions were an integral part of the party structure—members of affiliated unions more or less automatically became members of the party and union dues provided its main source of funding.

As party leader, Tony Blair set out to "modernise" the party. Two decades ago, he declared his intention to sever the link with the unions, thus to transform Labour into an outright capitalist party like the U.S. Democratic Party. The "Blair project" has been a protracted one, not least because the party tops wanted to keep the union donations which remain the party's main source of funding. Meanwhile, the pro-capitalist leadership of the unions clung to the Labour Party, even as the party became seen as toxic by the union rank and file. For some years Labour has been moribund as a reformist party of the working class. Finally, in March 2014, a special party conference voted to disaffiliate the trade unions over a period of five years. In a delightful irony, the new members who have surged into the party to support Corbyn are today eligible to vote for the party leader courtesy of new rules adopted at the conference that disaffiliated the unions.

Corbyn insists that if elected he would want to maintain unity with the right wing of the party. But the clear fact is that two opposing classes are clashing within the framework of one party. On one side, the Blairites, who have a majority of Labour MPs, are unashamedly loyal to the City of London bankers and seek to expunge the connection to the unions. On the other side, Corbyn wants to rebuild the party's connection to the unions, which are overwhelmingly backing him. At a campaign rally in Glasgow, the 1,000-strong audience roared its approval when Corbyn

Workers Hammer

Workers and youth fed up with austerity: 250,000-strong protest in London, June 20.

declared that he's not ashamed of the party's connection to the trade unions, he's proud of it. His campaign is wildly popular with British working-class people, who have suffered the effects of major defeats for decades and for even longer have been told to know their place.

Following 18 years of Tory (Conservative) rule under Margaret Thatcher and her successor, Labour governments under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown continued with Thatcherite attacks on the unions, workers and minorities. Especially outrageous to the working class has been the piecemeal privatisation and running down of the National Health Service, which gives free healthcare to all. But the crime for which Blair is most reviled is taking Britain to war in Iraq alongside the U.S. When Jeremy Corbyn recently announced that, if elected, he would apologise for Britain's role in the Iraq war, he launched a missile against the Blairites.

Comparisons have been made in the bourgeois press between the Corbyn campaign and that of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, cheered by a chunk of the U.S. fake left. However, there is a fundamental difference—Corbyn's campaign seeks to recreate the "old Labour" reformist party, whereas Sanders is running for nomination by the Democratic Party, a bourgeois party. Whatever his "socialist" pretences, Sanders is a capitalist politician.

Moreover, there are substantive differences of policy between them. Sanders backed U.S. military interventions abroad, including Iraq and Afghanistan, enlisted in the "war against crime" (read: against black people) and backed a Senate resolution supporting the 2014 Israeli massacre of Palestinians in Gaza. For his part, Corbyn voted in Parliament against the invasion of Iraq and against the domestic measures enacted in the name of the "war on terror" which primarily targets Muslims. To thunderous applause at a west London rally he condemned Prime Minister David Cameron's vile racist comments about "a swarm" of immigrants. Not surprisingly, Corbyn has support among Britain's black and Asian minorities.

Corbyn's campaign has been ridiculed by the Labour Party tops, the Tory party and the right-wing press who all regard his brand of socialism as something that ought to be extinct. Scottish comedian Frankie Boyle skewered Corbyn's critics in the House of Lords: "I'm enjoying senior Tory peers calling Corbyn a 'throwback'. A guy in a horsehair wig wearing a cape, who got a job for life because his great-great-great-grandfather had a knack for picking out the healthiest slaves?"

As to why the 66-year-old Corbyn has a substantial following among youth, a supporter quoted by Seumas Milne in the *Guardian* (5 August) explained: "People say he is an old leftwinger or an old Marxist but to my generation his ideas seem quite new." Corbyn's "old Labour" reformism rests on the pipe dream of refashioning British capitalism to meet the needs of working people through enacting legislation in Parliament and nationalising industry.

Corbyn argues for reindustrialisation of the country, which indeed is necessary, as is regenerating Britain's infrastructure wholesale, rebuilding its rusting manufacturing base and putting the working class back into productive work. But finance capitalists will not opt to forgo the cool billions made through banking deals in favour of unknown returns on investment in reindustrialising the north of England. The bottom line for the capitalists is to invest where they can get the highest rate of return, and this cannot be changed through enacting legislation in Parliament. The party the working class needs is not a new version of "old Labour" but a revolutionary party to lead a fight for socialist revolution.

* * *

"Corbyn could lose, be deposed, go wrong but I love that sound, that beautiful soft sound of Tony Blair sobbing"
— Derek Wall, "Green socialist"

Jeremy Corbyn's campaign for Labour Party leader has the right wing frothing at the mouth—from the *Daily Mail* and the Murdoch press to Tony Blair and his successors. Corbyn has drawn enthusiastic support from youth, workers, and minorities who are sick to the back teeth of the austerity, racism and war dished out for years by Tory and Labour governments. Here, for the first time in ages, is a campaign that ***speaks to the felt needs of working people.***

Corbyn opposes Tory government attacks on benefits and the NHS, and is for decent pay and pensions for the public sector. He is for renationalising privatised services—rail, post and energy. All the main trade unions are backing Corbyn, not least because he is for repeal of the anti-union laws. He calls for affordable housing, desperately needed by the millions faced with extortionate house prices and rents. His campaign is for abolishing university tuition fees and restoring student grants. Corbyn opposes the government's "war on terror" targeting Muslims. And to his credit, he denounced the Labour leadership for caving in to UKIP's anti-immigrant racism in the run-up to the general election.

The Corbyn campaign outflanks to the left the bourgeois nationalists of the SNP [Scottish National Party] who wiped out Labour in Scotland in the election. Unlike the SNP, Corbyn opposes NATO and is for Britain out of this imperialist military alliance. In contrast to some on the left who howled with the imperialists over Ukraine, Corbyn could at least state the obvious that, "It is the US drive to expand eastwards which lies at the root of the crisis in the former Soviet republic" (*Morning Star* online, 17 April 2014). He is also opposed to renewing Britain's Trident nuclear missile system and has long called for British troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq. Corbyn is critical of the European Union and calls for cancellation of the Greek debt, which has starved the Greek people. However, whereas we revolutionary Marxists oppose the imperialist-dominated EU in principle, Corbyn wants to reform it, calling for a "better Europe."

A principled and honest representative of the left wing of old Labour in the tradition of Nye Bevan, Michael Foot and Tony Benn, Corbyn is an eloquent spokesman for the cause of parliamentary "socialism." All old Labour governments have loyally served the British capitalist class—carrying out attacks on the working class at home, supporting British imperialism in its wars abroad. Labour supported British imperialism in World War II, presided over the bloody partition of India, and in 1969 sent troops to Northern Ireland. Unity with the right wing of Labour has long been an article of faith for the Labour lefts, including Benn and Corbyn, while reformist groups like the Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Party in turn tailed the Labour lefts.

While the demands posed by the Corbyn campaign are supportable, they cannot be achieved through old Labour parliamentarism. Even to begin to address such issues as jobs for all, free quality healthcare and education requires mobilising the trade unions as fighting organisations of the working class, under new, class-struggle leadership. To regenerate the former industrial areas and to lay the basis for a decent living standard for all requires the overthrow of capitalist rule. Socialist revolution will shatter the capitalist state, expropriate the bourgeoisie and lay the basis for an internationally planned, socialised economy.

Victorious workers revolution in Britain will put an end to Westminster-based capitalist rule: abolish the monarchy, the established churches and the House of Lords! For the right of self-determination of Scotland and Wales! For a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The Spartacist League fights to construct the revolutionary workers party, section of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International, that is necessary for this task. ■

ISIS...

(continued from page 3)

on the Iraqi city of Falluja. More recently, reports have emerged of Arab residents being driven out of northern Syria by the U.S.-allied Kurdish People's Protection Committees (YPG).

Loren writes, "The de facto SL policy for the Kurds is to stand by and cheer as the Islamic fascists kill them." No. We have never denied the right of any community to defend itself. What we oppose is the Kurdish nationalists acting as proxies of imperialism. Loren does not dispute that they are playing that role; he merely excuses it by claiming that they "had no choice." In fact, the Kurdish nationalists have subordinated the just struggle for Kurdish national rights to their role as imperialist proxies, a crime for which the long-oppressed Kurdish people will pay the price.

In "Down With U.S. War Against ISIS!" (*WV* No. 1055, 31 October 2014), we warned, "By selling their souls to the imperialists as well as to various regional bourgeois regimes, Kurdish leaders help perpetuate the divide-and-rule stratagems that inevitably inflame communal, national and religious tensions and serve to reinforce the oppression of the Kurdish masses."

As has happened many times in the past, the Kurds' supposed benefactors have now turned on them. Last month, in exchange for use of the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey to launch operations against ISIS, the U.S. gave the Ankara regime the green light to launch airstrikes in northern Iraq against the YPG's allies, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, which both the U.S. and Turkey label as "terrorist"). These airstrikes are facilitated by intelligence about PKK bases in Iraq that the U.S. has been supplying to Turkey since 2007. The Turkish government is also cracking down on domestic opposition, arresting hundreds of Kurdish militants and others.

The myriad peoples of the Near East will not know peace, prosperity or justice until bourgeois rule in the region is overthrown through a series of socialist revolutions. Such a perspective demands first and foremost implacable opposition to imperialism. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Labour Party Fight Rocks Britain

Jeremy Corbyn: Tony Blair's Nightmare!

Getty; Workers Hammer (inset)

Crowd listening to Jeremy Corbyn in Durham, England, former coal mining center, July 11. Inset: Corbyn at August 17 rally in west London.

LONDON—A startling change has shaken up the political terrain in Britain this summer. With the defeat of the Labour Party in the May general election, Labour leader Ed Miliband resigned, opening up an election inside the party for its top post. Jeremy Corbyn, a longtime Labour Member of Parliament (MP), entered the race on a pro-working-class, anti-austerity programme and has rocketed to frontrunner. Voting, by post and online, is underway and the result will be announced on 12 September.

Three of the four candidates—Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall—stand in the anti-working-class tradition of "New Labour" under Tony Blair. Jeremy Corbyn is a stalwart of the left wing of the pre-Blair "old Labour" party. An MP for 32 years, Corbyn has voted against the party "whip" (directives on how to vote) some 500 times since 2001. Yet until now he has managed to remain in the background, not rocking the boat.

Corbyn's meteoric rise to frontrunner in the Labour leadership contest has shocked virtually everyone, including Corbyn himself, and provoked panic in the party establishment. Up and down the country, working people and youth are packing meeting halls and cheering Corbyn. Since May, the party has tripled its size to some 600,000, with hundreds of thousands joining as members or paying the £3 [$4.50] fee to sign up as supporters in order to vote for Corbyn. Horrified by this mass influx for Corbyn, the party leadership launched an intense red-scare-style witch hunt of his supporters, screaming that the party is being infiltrated by "Trotskyites" and other evil elements. Present and former party leaders wail that a Corbyn win would render Labour "unelectable." The party apparatus is feverishly working through the newly registered membership rolls and has disqualified over 50,000 votes so far.

Corbyn is not and does not claim to be

continued on page 11

ILA Must Fight for Safety!

New Jersey Docks: Death Trap

On August 7 at about 1:20 p.m., 49-year-old longshore worker Judy Jones was struck by a top loader used to move shipping containers around the APM terminal at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey. Her leg was severed and she bled to death waiting for an ambulance to arrive. There are no medical or ambulance facilities on the docks and the nearest trauma center hospital is about eight miles away in Newark. Reportedly it took more than half an hour for the ambulance to arrive.

From a longshore family, Jones was a member of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Newark Local 1233, as is her brother, Wayne Jones. A veteran dock worker with 18 years experience, on the day she was killed she was a "holdman," working containers on the dock. As reported by the Blueoceana website, in order to take a bathroom break, she had to get to a restroom 400 yards away. Jones was struck while walking through the busy terminal amid the many moving vehicles and equipment that transfer the containers (which can weigh up to 30 tons). Longshoremen told *WV* that there are no designated pedestrian walkways at the APM terminal (although the company is no doubt slapping some paint on the pavement after the fact) and that APM is the only major container terminal in the area that does not provide a passenger vehicle for "holdmen" to safely move about the terminal.

Facebook (inset), NOAA

ILA longshoreman Judy Jones (inset), killed on August 7 while working at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Cargo traffic at the New York-New Jersey (NY-NJ) port has increased almost 20 percent in the last decade, but the terminal area for handling this cargo has remained the same. The bustling container storage areas are jam-packed, and longshoremen are under tremendous pressure to keep the containers moving in and out of the yard. The drivers of the massive container-handling machines—top loaders, straddle carriers and transtainers—have limited visibility. Transtainer operators often have to rely solely on safety sensors and cameras (assuming they're working).

On top of the speedup, ILA members on the Jersey docks work grueling amounts of overtime. During the busy summer season, it is common for workers to put in ***over 100 hours*** a week. According to the *Journal of Commerce*, overtime accounts for a staggering 61 percent of ILA work hours at the NY-NJ port. Unlike other ports with fixed work shifts, ILAers here work open-ended shifts until the ship is finished, which can be *24 hours or more* (punctuated by breaks).

Longshoring ranks high among the most dangerous industries, but under these intolerable conditions of speedup and fatigue, avoidable accidents that maim and kill are inevitable—it's industrial murder. In 2012, Earline Brundage, another woman member of Local 1233, died after being pinned between two containers, an

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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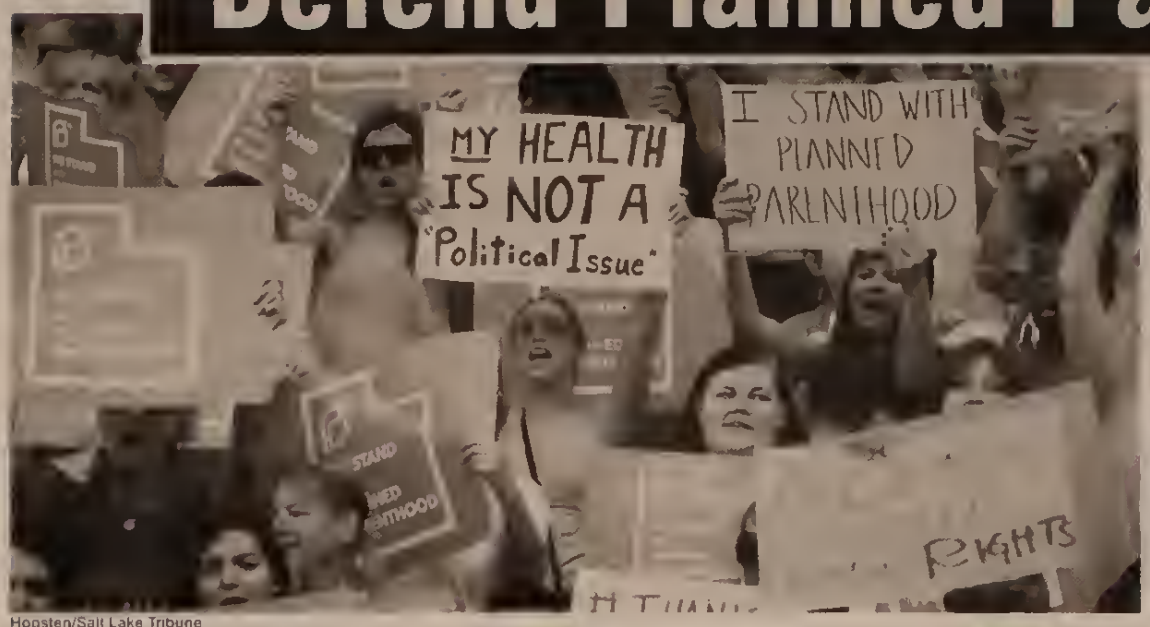
No. 1074 18 September 2015

Defend Planned Parenthood!



Hogsten/Salt Lake Tribune

Seal/NY Times

For Free Abortion on Demand!

In the unending barrage of attacks on abortion rights, right-wing bigots are once again targeting Planned Parenthood, one of the leading providers of affordable contraception, abortion and women's health care in the U.S. David Daleiden, of the grotesquely misnamed Center for Medical Progress, set up a phony biomedical research company and then made undercover videos of meetings with Planned Parenthood employees about the entirely legal procurement of fetal tissue donated for research by patients. Edited to the point of misrepresentation, these "sting" videos were seized upon by largely Republican Congressmen to propose cutting all federal funds to Planned Parenthood—and threatening to hold the federal budget hostage this fall if they don't get what they want. Planned Parenthood receives more than $500 million—over 40 percent of its annual funding—from government sources, mostly Medicaid.

Left: Protesters in Salt Lake City denounce Utah governor's decision to block federal funding for Planned Parenthood, August 25. Right: Mother and children at Planned Parenthood clinic in Edinburg, Texas, 2012.

Not willing to wait, five states—Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Hampshire and Utah—have already moved to cut funds for Planned Parenthood. The response of feminists and liberals has been defensive, with Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, apologizing for the "tone and statements" of the staff in one of the videos. On September 4, with the anti-abortion bigots emboldened by wide press coverage of the efforts to demonize the organization, an arson attack destroyed the Planned Parenthood clinic in Pullman, Washington.

The crusade against Planned Parenthood is an attack on the millions of women—many of them young, uninsured, poor and minority—who use its services. The Government Accountability Office reported in 2012 that 80 percent of Planned Parenthood patients had incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. A September 1 article in the *New York Times*

continued on page 4

Ten Years After Katrina

New Orleans: Still Racist Hell

The following article is based on reporting from New Orleans by Workers Vanguard *contributor Ruth Ryan and a visiting* WV *team.*

At events marking the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was visited by U.S. presidents past and present. Clinton, Bush, Obama and other capitalist politicians showed up to try to lay to rest the still-vivid images from 2005: 1,800 dead, black residents stranded on rooftops and roadsides, tens of thousands abandoned at the Superdome, hundreds jailed at Camp Greyhound, dozens shot at by cops in the streets, and the surviving population corralled at gunpoint in the Convention Center. After these televised images horrified the world, survivors were eventually bused and airlifted out so "order" could be established in the vacant city by an occupying army of cops and National Guardsmen. Katrina refugees were treated like criminals for one reason—they were black and poor.

If the powers that he were criminally slow to the rescue, they were lightning quick in throwing up barriers to keep poor black people from ever returning home. The moment the city was emptied, politicians from both capitalist parties set about to dismantle institutions that might aid and abet the return of the black population, with Louisiana Democrats taking the lead. A stop was put to the cleanup at Charity Hospital, and it was permanently shuttered. Some 7,000 unionized teachers and public school employees were fired. All the big housing projects were fenced off and bulldozed. The city's wealthy Bourbons got what they wanted: a smaller, richer and whiter New Orleans. Around 100,000 black residents never returned.

AP

31 August 2005: Desperate families wade through floodwaters two days after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

Speeches at the commemorative events and dozens of articles in the bourgeois press were full of praise for the "resilience" of New Orleans residents and the extent of the city's recovery since the storm. The official message was that things have been made right. According to Democratic mayor Mitch Landrieu, "Nobody can refute the fact that we have completely turned this story around," while *Forbes* magazine crowed: "The metro area has made an impressive comeback" (26 August).

The social disaster that unfolded in the

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"Karl Marx" by V.I. Lenin

We print below the second installment of Lenin's "Karl Marx." The first section, a sketch of Marx's life as a philosopher and revolutionary, was published in WV *No. 1073 (4 September). This second part is an introduction to Marxist ideology including historical materialism and dialectics. Future installments will explain other basic Marxist concepts.*

PART TWO

The Marxist Doctrine

Marxism is the system of Marx's views and teachings. Marx was the genius who continued and consummated the three main ideological currents of the 19th century, as represented by the three most advanced countries of mankind: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines in general. Acknowledged even by his opponents, the remarkable consistency and integrity of Marx's views, whose totality constitutes modern materialism and modern scientific socialism, as the theory and programme of the working-class movement in all the civilised countries of the world, make it incumbent on us to present a brief outline of his world-conception in general, prior to giving an exposition of the principal content of Marxism, namely, Marx's economic doctrine.

Philosophical Materialism

Beginning with the years 1844-45, when his views took shape, Marx was a materialist and especially a follower of Ludwig Feuerbach, whose weak points he subsequently saw only in his materialism being insufficiently consistent and comprehensive. To Marx Feuerbach's historic and "epoch-making" significance lay in his having resolutely broken with [Georg] Hegel's idealism and in his proclamation of materialism, which already "in the eighteenth century, particularly French materialism, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and against...religion and theology, but also...against all metaphysics" (in the sense of "drunken speculation" as distinct from "sober philosophy"). (*The Holy Family*, in *Literarischer Nachlass.*) "To Hegel..." wrote Marx, "the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos (the creator, the maker) of the real world.... With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." (*Capital*, Vol. I, Afterword to the Second Edition). In full conformity with this materialist philosophy of Marx's, and expounding it, Frederick Engels wrote in *Anti-Dühring* (read by Marx in the manuscript): "The unity of the world does not consist in its being.... The real unity of the world consists in its materiality, and this is proved...by a long and wearisome development of philosophy and natural science...." "Motion is the mode of existence of matter. Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, or motion without matter, nor can there be.... But if the...question is raised: what thought and consciousness really are, and where they come from; it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of Nature, which has developed in and along with its environment; hence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of Nature, do not contradict the rest of Nature's interconnections but are in correspondence with them....

no credit

Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, the founders of scientific socialism, with Marx's daughters, early 1860s.

"Hegel was an idealist, that is to say, the thoughts within his mind were to him not the more or less abstract images [*Abbilder*, reflections; Engels sometimes speaks of "imprints"—*Lenin*] of real things and processes, but, on the contrary, things and their development were to him only the images, made real, of the 'Idea' existing somewhere or other before the world existed." In his *Ludwig Feuerbach*—which expounded his own and Marx's views on Feuerbach's philosophy, and was sent to the printers after he had re-read an old manuscript Marx and himself had written in 1844-45 on Hegel, Feuerbach and the materialist conception of history—Engels wrote: "The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is the relation of thinking and being...spirit to Nature... which is primary, spirit or Nature.... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to Nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other...comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded Nature as primary, belonged to the various schools of materialism." Any other use of the concepts of (philosophical) idealism and materialism leads only to confusion. Marx decidedly rejected, not only idealism, which is always linked in one way or another with religion, but also the views—especially widespread in our day—of [David] Hume and [Immanuel] Kant, agnosticism, criticism, and positivism in their various forms; he considered that philosophy a "reactionary" concession to idealism, and at best a "shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world". On this question, see, besides the works by Engels and Marx mentioned above, a letter Marx wrote to Engels on December 12, 1868, in which, referring to an utterance by the naturalist Thomas Huxley, which was "more materialistic" than usual, and to his recognition that "as long as we actually observe and think, we cannot possibly get away from materialism", Marx reproached Huxley for leaving a "loop-hole" for agnosticism, for Humism. It is particularly important to note Marx's view on the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is blind only insofar as it is not understood'" (Engels in *Anti-Dühring*). This means recognition of the rule of objective laws in Nature and of the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom (in the same manner as the transformation of the uncognised but cognisable "thing-in-itself" into the "thing-for-us", of the "essence of things" into "phenomena"). Marx and Engels considered that the "old" materialism, including that of Feuerbach (and still more the "vulgar" materialism of [Ludwig] Büchner, [Karl] Vogt and [Jacob] Moleschott), contained the following major shortcomings: (1) this materialism was "predominantly mechanical", failing to take account of the latest developments in chemistry and biology (today it would be necessary to add: and in the electrical theory of matter); (2) the old materialism was non-historical and non-dialectical (metaphysical, in the meaning of anti-dialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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On Imperialism and Refugees

12 July 2015

Workers Vanguard,

In *WV* No. 1071 (10 July 2015), I noticed a small paragraph in an article ("Europe: Racist Clampdown on Immigration") which stated, "We say: Those who make it here should have the right to stay here—Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! Shut down the detention camps! All imperialist military forces out of Africa and the Near East!"

What is meant by "Those who make it here should have the right to stay here"? What about those people who have not made it here yet, e.g. those who are stranded in the seas and are being blocked by the imperialists from "making it here"? As communists, shouldn't we defend their right to get off the boats? Perhaps this is just a case of bad wording in an attempt by *WV* to separate its slogans from the call to "open the borders", but these are important questions that I asked myself after I read that paragraph. The rest of the article is excellent!

Comradely,
Joseph C.

***WV* replies:**

Joseph C.'s questions suggest he would prefer the wording: "Those who want to make it here should have the right to get and stay here," at least in the case of the many thousands trapped at sea. But why stop with them? What about those braving treacherous overland routes (caught, say, in the Libyan desert)? Or the millions confined to squalid camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan? Or the countless people unable to even begin the escape from their war-ravaged, famine-stricken home countries, laid waste to by the U.S. imperialists and their allies?

The desperate efforts of so many people to get into Europe (and the U.S.) are a direct consequence of the imperialist subjugation of the neocolonial world. With their systematic looting of wide swaths of the planet and devastating wars, or proxy wars, from Afghanistan to the Near East to Africa, the advanced capitalist powers impose inhuman conditions on the vast majority of mankind. The UN estimates that there are now some 60 million people worldwide displaced by war and persecution, the highest number since World War II. Many millions more migrate to escape the grinding poverty inflicted by capitalist imperialism. Demanding "the right to get off the boats" onto the shores of Europe is in effect a call to "open the borders."

This demand imbibes the false belief that the very same imperialist rulers, having intercepted the boats to pack the refugees off to some terrible fate, can be made to act out of humanitarian concern, bringing them ashore to a life of supposed freedom and economic well-being. Alternately, the demand may aim for the abolition of border patrols, but no capitalist ruling class has or ever will voluntarily relinquish control over its own territory, as the article cited by Joseph C. notes.

The call to "open the borders" and its variants are hopelessly utopian. The modern nation-state arose as a vehicle for the development of capitalism and will remain the basis for the organization of the capitalist economy until the world capitalist order is shattered through a series of workers revolutions. Policing its borders is vital to the very ***existence*** of the capitalist state power. Moreover, "open the borders" can have a reactionary content, from advancing imperialist economic penetration of dependent countries to obliterating the right to national self-determination.

Despite pleas to (temporarily) open the borders in the face of the refugee crisis today rocking Europe, the bourgeoisies there have no intention of allowing unrestricted immigration. Whatever they do will not be out of any kind of altruism. To the extent that German chancellor Angela Merkel is now posturing as a great humanitarian and offering to open the door to 800,000 migrants, it is because Germany has a falling birth rate and is in need of manpower in certain sectors of its economy. Once these jobs are filled, the door will again be slammed shut. In fact, Germany quickly moved to close its border with Austria. Other European countries, which have different labor needs, are much less inclined to take in refugees, highlighting yet again the divisions within the European Union.

There can be no progressive immigration policy under capitalism, and it is not the business of communists to propose policy alternatives. Our aim is to organize the social power of the proletariat to smash this capitalist system and establish workers rule. To foster the unity, solidarity and fighting capacity of our class, we seek to mobilize the labor movement in defense of immigrants, including by championing ***full citizenship rights*** for all and opposing deportations, roundups and detention center hellholes. Against employer attempts to wield undocumented workers as a club against labor, they must be brought into the unions with full rights and protections. To stem the tide of growing fascist and right-wing anti-immigrant terror, workers defense guards are an urgent necessity.

In our article "The Leninist Policy Toward Immigration/Emigration" (*WV* No. 36, 18 January 1974), we observed regarding the "open the borders" demand: "This is merely a variant of utopian egalitarianism—the belief that a just society can be established by sharing out the currently available wealth." As Marxists, we recognize that it will take a series of workers revolutions across the globe and the establishment of an internationally planned economy to eliminate material scarcity through a vast increase in the productive forces of all countries. This alone can provide a decent life for those who now live in the teeming slums and rural villages of the Third World as well as the ghettos and barrios of this country. Only then can there be a world without borders.■

Oliver Sacks: An Appreciation

1 September 2015

Dear Comrades,

I was saddened to see that Oliver Sacks died on 30 August of metastatic melanoma. Despite his admitted literary "too-muchness" (as he put it in his memoir *On the Move: A Life*), his books were welcome bright spots, committed to bourgeois science and a better understanding of the human mind in a reactionary imperialist age.

Oliver Sacks was born in England in 1933. Both his parents were physicians and Orthodox Jews. He was inquisitive and highly educated, and his homosexuality created personal contradictions for him in a time when being gay was largely a social and religious taboo. He became a neurologist, perhaps most well known for his 1973 book *Awakenings* about patients with "sleepy-sickness" who were brought back to life with the drug L-dopa (the book was made into a movie in 1990).

In November 2014, Sacks wrote a small piece for the *New Yorker* on the ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), a kind of ancient gymnosperm (the first plants with seeds). Sacks' small article explained something I didn't know: a ginkgo drops its leaves all on the same day in the fall, unlike angiosperms (flowering plants) whose leaves fall off over time as they weaken and blow away. The reportedly oldest *Gingko biloba* in America is at Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia (the first American botanical garden), and it must be something to watch Bartram's enormous ginkgo drop all its leaves in the course of one day.

His books deal with fascinating elements of the human mind, like the man with agnosia "who mistook his wife for a hat." I appreciated his stories about

Mackler/Globe

the neurological source of his own face blindness. I read with interest his book *Hallucinations*, as an elderly relative of mine had begun to "see" people who were "visiting" her; it helped me appreciate how people experience life as their minds degenerate. I also learned that while hallucinations may be visual, they may also be olfactory or auditory. It was oddly comforting to learn that, when one is tortured and isolated for prolonged periods—like the U.S. imperialists treat their "enemies," at home and abroad—the mind will create its own hallucinatory world.

I empathize with Sacks' hostility to the "complete subjugation of the human to medical arrogance and technology" in nursing homes, treatment that is commonplace in capitalist medicine.

His fascinating books provide insight into the breadth, complexity and fragility of the human mind.

Comradely,
S. Williams

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Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

described what Planned Parenthood did last year in Louisiana: "administer nearly 20,000 tests for sexually transmitted infections, as well as provide gynecological exams, contraceptive care, cancer screenings and other wellness services for nearly 10,000 mostly low-income patients."

In the face of the decades-long anti-abortion onslaught, the feminists' strategy of lobbying, voting Democrat and delivering legal briefs before the Supreme Court has consistently ceded more ground to the forces of reaction. In the 1990s, groups like the National Organization for Women (NOW) actively worked to demobilize clinic defense actions, preaching confidence in Bill Clinton. In office, Clinton viciously attacked black, poor and working-class women by slashing welfare and forcing recipients into low-wage, dead-end workfare jobs that did not pay enough to cover childcare.

The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which struck down state anti-abortion laws, was a product of broad social struggles in the U.S. at the time—from the civil rights movement to the demonstrations against the Vietnam War. But like all democratic rights under capitalism, the right to abortion is fettered by race and class. If you are poor, black, Latina or immigrant; if you can't afford the cost of an abortion, or the time off work; if you don't have medical insurance, or your insurance won't cover abortion; or if you are underage, then your legal right is already attenuated almost to nonexistence. At the same time, simple lack of access to what remains of abortion rights afflicts women of all backgrounds except the very wealthiest: an estimated 89 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion facilities.

As we wrote last year:

> "While abortion should be merely a question of basic health care, the anti-women bigots view it as a threat to the patriarchal family, the main source of women's oppression and a key prop of capitalist class rule. Unrestricted access to abortion and contraception is essential for all women to exercise control over whether and when they will have children. There is an urgent need for mass struggle to defend abortion rights. As Marxists, we fight for ***free abortion on demand*** as part of a system of quality health care for all that is free at the point of delivery."
>
> —"For Free Abortion Available to All!" *WV* No. 1052, 19 September 2014

In recent years, the anti-abortion forces have been pushing state laws known as Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP) that aim to erect insurmountable barriers to keeping abortion clinics open. These medically useless regulations commonly require expensive building upgrades (such as widened hallways) and compel physicians to have admitting privileges at hospitals that often will not grant them. In Texas, such laws have resulted in the number of abortion clinics plummeting from 41 to 18. There is a relentless barrage of anti-abortion legal moves, from parental consent and "squeal rules" to waiting periods and even obscene prosecutions of individual women after miscarriages on grounds of alleged drug use or drinking alcohol—personal choices that should be no one else's business.

Reuters

AP

Left: President Bill Clinton signing 1996 bill to "end welfare as we know it." Right: President Barack Obama signing 2010 Affordable Care Act that includes denial of federal funding for most abortions.

Roe v. Wade, which was based narrowly on a woman's right to privacy, struck down bans on abortion in the first trimester, but it did not prevent states from targeting women in later stages of pregnancy. And they have. Late-term abortions are illegal in 19 states; violent harassment and murder have reduced the number of physicians willing to perform late-term abortions to four in the entire country. "Fetal pain" bills ban abortions at 20 weeks, and "conscience" laws allow health care workers and institutions to deny service to desperate women.

In a sinister new move, a bill in Ohio would criminalize a woman's decision to abort a fetus diagnosed with Down syndrome. A similar bill is already on the books in North Dakota. Continuing a campaign to foster the religious notion that a fetus is a "person" with its own rights, the self-proclaimed "pro-life" opponents of "big government" would surely oppose any government assistance in raising, educating or supporting the thousands of actual human beings who would be born with this disability.

Democrats: The Other Party of Anti-Woman Capitalism

While some Democratic politicians posture as champions of "choice," recognizing the simple fact that most people in this country are in favor of some kind of abortion rights, they do not want to yield the terrain of religious moralism and "family values" to their bourgeois competition. While professing support for women's rights (though rarely even uttering the word "abortion"), they join in backing many of the key measures that restrict reproductive rights, from blocking young people's access to contraception and abortion to banning late-term abortions.

Though the religious, Republican right grabs the anti-abortion spotlight, restricting women's rights has always been very much a bipartisan affair. Just a few years after the *Roe* ruling, Illinois Republican Henry Hyde proposed ending Medicaid funding for all abortions. His goal was stamping out the right to abortion for all women, but he settled for the most vulnerable: at that time, Medicaid funded one-third of all abortions in the U.S. The avowedly evangelical Democratic president Jimmy Carter signed the Hyde Amendment into law, and it has been renewed by Congress every year since 1980. For 23 of the last 27 years, Congress has also forbidden the District of Columbia from using its own revenues to fund abortions for poor women, as the 50 states can; 93 percent of the women affected are non-white. Bill Clinton signed this ban six times during his presidency. How many women have been forced to bear children they did not want and could not afford is unknown.

Obama's signature health care "reform" act explicitly denies any federal funding for abortions unless the pregnancy results from rape or incest or is a threat to the health of the mother. Under current regulations in the Affordable Care Act marketplace, individuals looking for private insurance that will cover abortion can be faced with a surcharge. And of course there are zero health dollars for undocumented immigrants. On contraception as well, the Obama administration has promoted anti-sex backwardness. In 2011, the administration overrode the FDA's decision to allow over-the-counter access for teens to Plan B One-Step, the "morning after" pill. Only after a federal judge ruled that the decision was "politically motivated, scientifically unjustified, and contrary to agency precedent" did the Justice Department back down in 2013.

Since the origin of our species over 100,000 years ago, adolescents have been sexually active. Haranguing teenagers to "just say no" to sex is a losing battle if ever there was one. In a refreshing shift from all the ignorant, punitive "abstinence only" school programs, a privately funded 2009 program in Colorado offered teenagers and young women free intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants. In six years, birthrates dropped by 40 percent and abortions fell 42 percent among teenagers; there were equally impressive rates among women under 25. Some of the biggest drops came in the state's poorest areas. But the private funding ran out, and state legislators earlier this year refused a request for $5 million to keep the program alive.

For teenagers who do get pregnant, even having a sympathetic parent is not necessarily a safeguard from Orwellian government regulations. In 2014, a Pennsylvania woman, Jennifer Ann Whalen, was jailed for buying misoprostol and mifepristone (formerly RU-486) online for her teenage daughter. A personal-care aide, Whalen did not have insurance covering her daughter and could not afford $500 for an abortion. The pills cost $45 and are safe and effective. This FDA-approved alternative to surgical abortion is now the treatment of choice for roughly a quarter of women seeking abortions. But

KREM.com via AP

Pullman, Washington: Planned Parenthood clinic after arson attack, September 4.

because she did not have a prescription, and her daughter did not take the pills under a doctor's supervision, Whalen was convicted of endangering the welfare of a child, dispensing drugs without a license and assault.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

While the bourgeois feminists respond to attacks on abortion rights by pleading with the Democrats, the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party's (RCP) Stop Patriarchy campaign offers a more militant version of "fight the right" pressure politics. For the last couple of summers, Stop Patriarchy has organized Abortion Rights Freedom Rides into Bible Belt country, including protests in places like Jackson, Mississippi, and Wichita, Kansas. No doubt, activists boldly chanting "abortion on demand and without apology" are a welcome sight for beleaguered clinic staff. But by aiming its fire against the "fascist" Republican governors and bemoaning the Democrats' "craven defensiveness" (revcom.us, 27 July), the RCP at bottom expresses the same aim as liberals: get the supposedly pro-choice Democrats to stand up for women. One need only recall its long-running campaign to "Drive Out the Bush Regime!" which finally achieved...the election of Barack Obama. The RCP's message is clear: the Republicans are enemies of the people (true enough), so the Democrats, the lesser evil, are preferable.

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New Orleans...

(continued from page 1)

wake of Katrina was entirely man-made, exposing the raw reality of race and class in capitalist America. The same can be said of the recovery, which has overwhelmingly benefited the local business elite and government officials. Dollars have been spent, to be sure. An expanded levee protection system cost more than $14 billion. A new $25 million championship golf course is under construction in City Park. Tourism has rebounded, and the number of restaurants is up from 800 to 1,400. But the truth is, poor and working black people have been excluded from this nominal recovery in countless ways.

A case in point is the lack of access to health care. Since Katrina, there are fewer hospital beds and doctors in black areas of the city, where medical treatment was shoddy before the storm. The University Medical Center (UMC)—a state-of-the-art, 34-acre medical complex that opened in August—includes a Level 1 Trauma Center and 446 beds, but only 250 of them are available for use. In contrast, Charity had 700 beds and, true to its name, if you had no money, you didn't have to pay. Work conditions are bad at the new "white elephant" hospital, as *WV* learned from a longshoreman whose wife works at UMC and used to work at Charity.

The city's longstanding economic inequality has widened. The median household income of New Orleans blacks is less than half that of whites: $25,000 versus $60,000. The total number of jobs is down almost 10 percent since Katrina, and employment has shifted ever more into minimum-wage service and tourist industry jobs. Retail, fast food, hotel and restaurant work have supplanted shipbuilding. Today, the biggest employers are non-union hospitals, notorious for low wages and tyrannical management.

At every turn, black people face obstacles to making a living. Poverty-wage workers can rarely afford cars—they depend on public transport to get to work. Federal money has been funneled into expansion of streetcar lines in tourist areas, but ten years after the storm, bus service is only at 35 percent of its previous level.

Segregation and the concentration of poverty have been re-established far away from jobs, transportation, shopping and services. Before Katrina, public housing was centered around downtown, near job locations. Project residents may have held minimum-wage jobs, multiple part-time jobs and split-shift jobs, but at least they could get to work. Today, an expanded Section 8 voucher program has largely replaced public housing, with residents displaced to remote apartment complexes like those near the swamplands of New Orleans East. Meanwhile, the old projects have been replaced with beautiful new "mixed income" units mostly renting at unaffordable market rates.

Before the storm, the now-empty Lower Ninth Ward had one of the highest home ownership rates in the city. The federal Road Home program was purportedly launched to help homeowners whose residences were destroyed, but it turned out to be a bureaucratic nightmare of racism, denial and piecemeal payouts. With $119 million in funds still unreleased, the program is popularly derided as the "Roadblock Home." Except for a handful of "Brad Pitt" houses built by the actor's foundation, the Lower 9 is a kingdom of snakes, rats and grass, a reminder of a black diaspora kept far away from home.

Katrina gave the U.S. capitalist rulers the chance to push through a pilot project for the dismantling of public education on a citywide scale. Charter schools rushed in after the public schools were shuttered and the teachers union busted. Experienced teachers were replaced with fresh college grads earning a miserly $15 an hour. Now, over 90 percent of students in the city attend charters.

Their backers boast of results, but an op-ed published by the bourgeoisie's newspaper of record, the *New York Times*, noted "growing evidence that the reforms have come at the expense of the city's most disadvantaged children, who often disappear from school entirely" (22 August). No surprise—the charters cherry-pick students, maneuver artfully to exclude the disabled and expel black youth ten times more often than whites. Special schools set up for those expelled amount to a pipeline for black youth into the juvenile prison system.

As always in New Orleans and across the country, the police, courts and prisons are terrorizing the black population. Despite a recent Department of Justice investigation and consent decree, children continue to be housed alongside adult prisoners in the scandal-ridden Orleans Parish Prison. Of New Orleans juveniles arrested so far in 2015, a full *99 percent* have been black, according to the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights. The government's response to this outrage has been more jails, with a new juvenile facility completed earlier this year. A massive new adult prison complex has been built for upwards of $145 million. In this sick society, a conviction or even an arrest is often a bar to a decent job.

If Katrina's aftermath proved anything, it is that the capitalist class views poor black people as a surplus population to be condemned and imprisoned, if not killed outright at the hands of one of their thugs in blue. Just one month ago, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a decision overturning the conviction of five New Orleans police officers in the infamous Danziger Bridge incident. Six days after Katrina, the depraved cops opened fire on unarmed people crossing the bridge in a desperate search for food and water, killing two and wounding four of them. All in a day's work, says the appeals court.

New Orleans is a particularly stark expression of the normal workings of racist American capitalism's "justice" system. The U.S. imprisons more per capita than any other country in the world, and Louisiana ranks highest among the 50 states, with twice the national rate. And within Louisiana, New Orleans has the highest rate of any jurisdiction. The Urban League reports that almost 90 percent of the city's prisoners are black.

But black people, whose racial oppression is woven into the very fabric of American capitalism, are hardly powerless. Despite the destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers continue to be integrated into strategic sectors of the proletariat, including manufacturing, much of which is now located in the South, and longshore in New Orleans and elsewhere. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. When the working class shatters the racist capitalist order through socialist revolution, the old Crescent City, one of the most cultured and complex cities on this continent, will begin to shine like a diamond on the banks of the Mississippi, unfettered by the profit system that today pulls it down in the mud. What we wrote in a Spartacist League statement (reprinted in *WV* No. 854, 16 September 2005) at the time of Hurricane Katrina is just as true today: "As New Orleans shows, the choice is clear: socialism or barbarism."■

Ted Graham photos

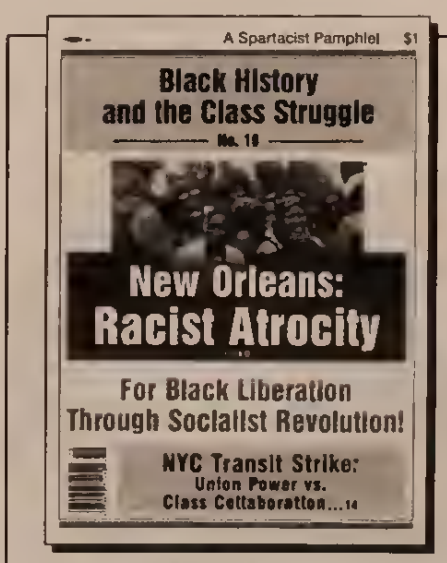
Above: Newly constructed New Orleans Parish Prison. Below: St. Bernard public housing project demolished, March 2008.

It is not that the Democratic Party is a half-hearted friend of the workers and oppressed—on the contrary, it represents the interests of the capitalist ruling class that owns the means of production and lives off the labor of the working class. Likewise, feminism speaks for bourgeois and wealthy petty-bourgeois women whose quarrel with capitalist society is that it denies them full access to the boys' club of ruling-class power. The RCP and Stop Patriarchy pander to bourgeois feminism, not least in their puritanical railing against everything from pornography to thongs to strip clubs—things the feminists falsely present as sources of women's oppression. In fact, the RCP's anti-sex moralism buys into the same "family values" pushed by the anti-abortionists (see "Church of Avakian Decrees: No Nudes Is Good Nudes," *WV* No. 1020, 22 March 2013).

The war on abortion rights is part of the bipartisan assault on the rights and living conditions of working people—from union-busting, poverty wages and layoffs to skyrocketing medical costs and the shredding of what is left of the social safety net. The Spartacist League has always fought for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all as part of a broader program of revolutionary working-class struggle. We seek to build a party that will make the working class conscious of the need to fight for its own class interests as well as those of women and all the oppressed.

Working women come home to their "second job"—the tasks of maintaining the family and raising the next generation of workers. Abortion is an explosive social issue because it offers women some control over their own sexuality and reproduction, thus challenging women's inequality. Any question that touches upon the equality of women runs straight up against religion and the institution of the family—vital props for the capitalist system of exploitation and its oppression of women and youth (see "The Marxist Approach to Women's Liberation—Communism and the Family," *WV* Nos. 1068 and 1069, 15 and 29 May).

Only a deep-going transformation of society can redress the oppression of women. Our program is the struggle for socialist revolutions internationally, sweeping away the capitalist system by destroying the power of the capitalist rulers and breaking down the racist and sexist divisions that have served as tools of their domination. The rule of the working class and the establishment of an internationally planned economy will open the road to socialism.■



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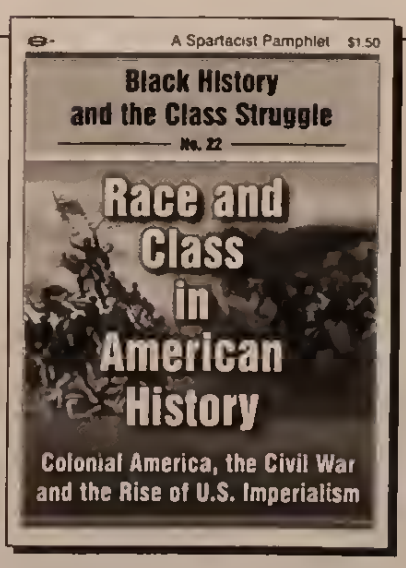

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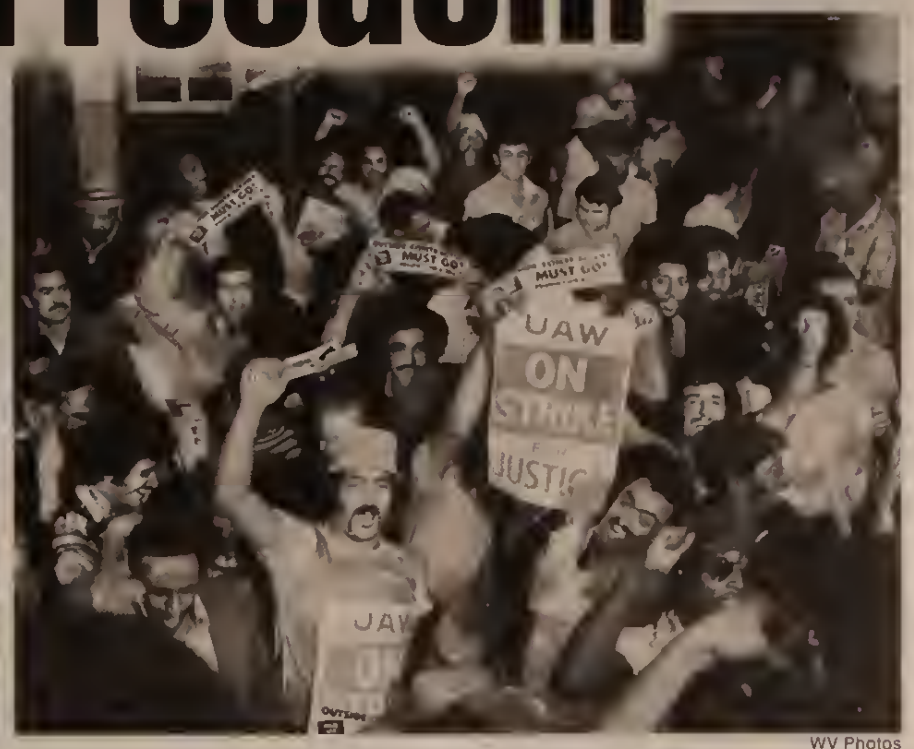

WV Photos

Left: 27 November 1982 labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C., initiated by the Spartacist League, stopped the Ku Klux Klan. Right: Ford workers at River Rouge plant in Detroit join 1976 nationwide auto strike.

We print below the second part of a presentation, edited for publication, given to a Spartacist League meeting in New York City this summer by Workers Vanguard *Editorial Board member Paul Cone. Part One appeared in* WV *No. 1073 (1 September).*

PART TWO

Marxism vs. the Myth of "White Skin Privilege"

When the civil rights movement turned to the North, it rapidly found that no Civil Rights Act or Voting Rights Act could alter the hardened economic foundations of black oppression, manifested in rat-infested slums, mass unemployment, etc. Collision with the realities of racist American capitalism resulted in a fracturing of the civil rights movement and the emergence of its more militant wing. This polarization was powerfully reinforced by U.S. imperialism's Democrat-led bloody counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam. In 1966, 24-year-old Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader Stokely Carmichael raised the call for "black power." Yet, while they were critical of the pro-Democratic Party pressure politics of the liberal civil rights leaders, the young Black Power militants had no counterposed political strategy or program—they themselves called for more black Democratic politicians, cops, judges and administrators.

To some extent, the Black Power demand reflected an attempt to grasp for solutions outside the framework of U.S. capitalist society. But, as we warned in "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom," "The slogan 'black power' must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the 'black power' movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party in the South" (1966, reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9). This is exactly what happened. A case in point is Georgia's longtime Democratic Congressman John Lewis, who had been a radical SNCC leader in the 1960s.

With the union officialdom failing to mobilize labor's social power in support of the civil rights movement, black militants who lacked a class perspective gave up on the idea of a racially egalitarian society and accepted segregation and racism as an unchangeable norm. Organizational separatism became a psychological compensation for the manifest impossibility of acquiring a separate black nation-state. SNCC purged its white members. Other nationalist groupings emerged, most prominent among them the Black Panther Party, which formed in Oakland in 1966.

The Panthers courageously stood up to the racist ruling class and its kill-crazy cops. Counterposed to the petty-bourgeois "pork chop" nationalism exemplified by Ron Maulana Karenga, who joined in the cop/FBI COINTELPRO vendetta that killed 38 of their members, the Panthers groped for a way out of the hell of black life in America through means that went beyond what was acceptable to the capitalist rulers. That is, they were subjectively revolutionary. But the Panthers' glorification of ghetto rage and their rejection of the working class as the agent of socialist revolution and black freedom left them more vulnerable to state repression. The Panthers ran up against a vicious government campaign of assassinations, provocations, frame-ups and imprisonment aimed at beheading black struggle. In the end, they could only alternate between adventurism, with its bitter consequences, and appeals to the liberal establishment. Many of the Panthers who were not killed or locked away eventually made their way to the Democratic Party.

Against this backdrop emerged the doctrine of "white skin privilege" as announced by Noel Ignatin (Ignatiev) in his 1967 document "White Blindspot." This concept was soon adopted by a section of the New Left, which impressionistically wrote off the American working class in its entirety as a labor aristocracy.

Underlying Ignatin's "theory" is disdain for the need for a programmatically cohered revolutionary leadership. As we set forth in "Black and Red": "Our immediate goal is to develop a black Trotskyist cadre. We aim not only to recruit Negro members—a shortcut to the working class in this period—but to develop these black workers into Trotskyist cadres who will carry a leadership role in organizing the black masses, within the League itself and elsewhere." The period may have changed, but this goal, restated in the early 1980s as an aspiration for a 70 percent black party, has not changed in the nearly half-century of our existence.

AP

October 1966: SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael, who popularized call for Black Power, denounces the draft during Vietnam War at UC Berkeley mass rally.

Communists and Integrated Unions

Ignatin & Co. ignore the contradictions of capitalism that make proletarian revolution both necessary and possible. They also efface the history of integrated struggles and the betrayals of those struggles by both the union misleaders and the Stalinists, from whose milieu Ignatin came.

The Great Migration of black people out of the rural South, beginning around World War I, led to black workers increasingly becoming part of the industrial proletariat in the North. A similar process happened in the South as new industrial centers developed there over subsequent decades. Thus, rural sharecroppers were transformed into proletarians in large-scale factories. With white and black industrial workers sharing a clear identity of class interests, there was a basis for integrated class struggle and the struggle for black freedom. The forging of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) through a series of militant strikes in the 1930s opened the door for the integration of black workers into powerful industrial unions.

AP

May 1967, Sacramento: Armed Black Panthers after demonstration against gun control bill in Capitol building.

The Communist Party (CP) was in the forefront of fighting for black workers and farmers and against racial oppression and lynch-law terror during the early 1930s. CP-initiated Unemployed Councils in major cities fought against evictions. In the famous Scottsboro case, Communists led the struggle to free nine black youths who were framed up in 1931 on charges of raping two white girls on a freight train and jailed in Scottsboro, Alabama (eight of them sentenced to death).

The CP built the Share Croppers' Union (SCU), which represented thousands of evicted black farmers as well as cotton pickers, largely centered in Alabama. The struggle to organize the SCU was conducted in a state of perpetual

civil war with both legal and extralegal armed vigilante groups. By 1935, the SCU claimed some 12,000 members. The black-led SCU also sought, with great difficulty, to recruit rural whites to its ranks. In counties where the SCU was active, the CP routinely received hundreds of votes from an all-white electorate. Those impoverished whites who didn't dare join a black-led union demonstrated their solidarity by voting for CP candidates when and where they could.

Courageous as this work was, the Stalinist CP by this time was no longer a revolutionary organization. After Hitler's ascent to power in 1933, Stalin proclaimed the Popular Front—an alliance with a mythical "progressive bourgeoisie." Its American incarnation was Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal alliance. In 1941, the CP hailed U.S. entry into WWII (which came six months after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union) and worked overtime to enforce a "no strike" pledge issued by the trade-union bureaucracy. The Communists demanded that black people forsake their struggle for equality in the interest of the imperialist war effort. The betrayals of the CP during the war years helped wipe out gains for black people and served to discredit radical movements generally, although hundreds of black workers joined the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

While calling on class-conscious workers to militarily defend the Soviet Union, the SWP opposed the interimperialist slaughter. For this, 18 Trotskyists and Minneapolis Teamsters leaders were imprisoned under the anti-communist Smith Act by the FDR administration in 1941. The SWP maintained a revolutionary course through the difficult WWII years and the immediate postwar period. During the war, the SWP took up and publicized the defense cases of black soldiers victimized for opposing Jim Crow segregation. In the aftermath of anti-black riots in Detroit in 1943, the Trotskyists fought for flying squadrons of union militants to stand ready to defend black people menaced by racist mobs. As a result, the SWP made a major black recruitment breakthrough in that city. However, under the intense pressure of the Cold War, most of these recruits left the party over the next few years.

In the late 1940s, on the heels of a massive postwar strike wave and at the outset of the anti-Soviet Cold War, the Democratic Harry S. Truman administration launched a massive anti-Communist witchhunt to purge troublemakers from the industrial unions and smash their militancy. The Taft-Hartley Act barred Communists from holding union office and banned a whole host of militant strike tactics. The CIO bureaucracy opposed Taft-Hartley in words but adhered to it in practice. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the United Electrical union and nine other CP-led unions with a total of around one million members—almost 20 percent of the entire CIO membership—were expelled from that union federation. A key figure in leading these red purges was United Auto Workers (UAW) president and social democrat Walter Reuther, who later headed the CIO and collaborated with Martin Luther King.

The anti-red witchhunt took place alongside the obscenely named "Operation Dixie," the official (and unsuccessful) CIO campaign to organize the South. That campaign's failure lay in the refusal of the union tops to take up the cause of black rights, a refusal bound up with their fealty to the Democratic Party, which then ruled in the South. Hard terrain the South was, but the region had already experienced significant union growth in industries such as coal, metal mining, oil refining, mass transit, pulp, wood and paper. In its November 1946 issue, *Fortune* magazine grudgingly described resistance to the unions as weak and predicted that complete organization of the South would be inevitable.

Rather than reviving the mass militant workers mobilizations that built the CIO in the 1930s-'40s, the union tops sought acceptance from the white Southern elite. To that end, the CIO mostly restricted its organizing efforts to white workers. It targeted the largely white textile mills, shunting aside the more racially mixed tobacco, transportation and wood industries, which held more promise for success. By excluding left-wingers from Operation Dixie staff, the CIO sidelined those with proven experience in organizing the South. Declining to appeal to black workers, the all-white, conservative leadership lost union elections in textile plants with a large percentage of black workers.

The union bureaucrats not only failed to organize the South but also destroyed existing outposts of opposition to the Southern racist hegemony by raiding left-wing unions. Militantly anti-racist white unionists with large followings among black and white workers were driven out of the maritime, metal mining and tobacco unions. The sharp decline of union membership in recent decades can be traced to the failure to organize the South.

Illustration from the Young Communist League's *Young Worker* in 1930 reflects Communist Party's fight against black oppression.

What this meant was that when young liberal activists—black and white—entered the political scene during the civil rights struggles, they saw a labor movement that had no significant (or even insignificant) left wing sharing their own views toward racial oppression and Cold War militarism. All wings of the labor bureaucracy were rabidly anti-Communist and staunch anti-Soviet Cold Warriors. All wings defended the racist status quo in the North and only paid lip service to opposing legalized racial segregation in the South. Even racially integrated unions like the UAW were pervaded by racist practices. For example, the UAW skilled trades section in this period was almost exclusively white.

The History of "White Skin Privilege"

Ignatin's "White Blindspot" theory hinges on a W.E.B. DuBois quote from *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935): "It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white." Ignatin spins this thread to alibi the capitalist rulers by positing the poison of white chauvinism as "the ideological bulwark of the practice of white supremacy, the general oppression of blacks by whites."

According to Ignatin:

> "The U.S. ruling class has made a deal with the mis-leaders of American labor, and ***through them with the masses of white workers***.... You white workers help us conquer the world and enslave the non-white majority of the earth's laboring force, and we will repay you with a monopoly of the skilled jobs, we will cushion you against the most severe shocks of the economic cycle, provide you with health and education facilities superior to those of the non-white population...enable you on occasion to promote one of your number out of the ranks of the laboring class, and in general confer on you the material and spiritual privileges befitting your white skin."

He goes on to disparage the prospect of integrated struggle, writing that white workers "have more to lose than their chains; they have also to lose their white-skin privileges, the perquisites that separate them from the rest of the working class." In other words, no gains can be attained until white workers reject their purported white supremacy.

For Ignatin, the role of white leftists was to uncritically support the "black liberation struggle," while confining their own efforts to organizing only white activists and admonishing white workers to shed their privileges. Of course, he and his cothinkers offer no prescription for how to do so, other than telling white communists to go up to workers and "say frankly: you must renounce the privileges you now hold." In practice, this instruction meant calling on white workers to give up their jobs, accept lower wages, renounce upgrades and reject job protections like seniority rights, which had been won through hard-fought union struggles to shield militant workers (black as well as white) from dismissal at the whim of the bosses. During the Boston busing battles in the 1970s, Ignatin opposed a proposal to link the defense of busing to the fight for better quality education for all.

I feel a bit odd going on about Ignatin, as he would barely be a footnote in the history of the American left had he not sired this "white skin privilege" theory. His Sojourner Truth Organization (STO) was one of the more insignificant spin-offs from the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the main organization of the New Left. Nonetheless, Ignatin is representative of a broader layer of his political generation.

SDS split at its 1969 National Convention as the Weathermen and the Revolutionary Youth Movement-II, headed by Maoists Mike Klonsky and Bob Avakian, broke away from the Progressive Labor Party (PL)-led Worker-Student Alliance. This anti-PL lash-up, which lacked even the semblance of a working-class orientation, soon dissolved into competing clique-organizations, supposedly differing on the "central question" of how best to tail black nationalist and "Third World" movements.

The New Left generally held that the working class had become completely "bourgeoisified" and no longer had any revolutionary potential. The 1968 upsurge of French workers largely punctured that belief. To be sure, many American radicals, and especially black nationalists, maintained that in America, unlike in France, the white majority of the working class benefited materially from black oppression. While the Weathermen maintained their hostility to the proletariat, by the early 1970s, a time of heightened labor struggle in the U.S., the Maoists turned toward the working class.

In doing so, Avakian, Klonsky and Ignatin, now leading separate organizations, continued to identify the working class with its most backward members. By 1974, Avakian's Revolutionary Union (precursor to the Revolutionary Communist Party) decided to compete for leadership of the *anti-busing* forces on the streets of Boston. Denouncing the busing plan as a "capitalist hoax," the front-page headline of the October 1974 issue of its paper, *Revolution*, demanded: "People Must Unite to Smash Boston Busing Plan." We fought to defend the busing program that, however inadequate, was a step against racist segregation. We raised the call: "Implement the Busing Plan! Extend Busing into the Suburbs! Integrated Quality Education for All!" We also agitated for key integrated unions to organize labor/black defense of black schoolchildren terrorized by racist mobs in the streets.

Within a few years, the Avakianites adopted anew the "white skin privilege" mantle as they turned their back on the proletariat altogether and Klonsky's group disappeared into the Democratic Party. For its part, STO left the factories to concentrate on "anti-imperialist" support to guerrilla forces in the Third World. They subsequently threw themselves into the 1980s anti-nuke movement, which to them had the virtue of being their target audience: almost entirely white and petty-bourgeois.

In a 1975 article "A Golden Bridge," Ignatin described blacks who scabbed on the Great Steel Strike of 1919 as "heroic." He later published the journal *Race Traitor* and became a bit of a celebrity with his book *How the Irish Became White*. As an academic, Ignatin was provided a platform to rail against "white skin privilege" for over two decades, first from behind the ivy-covered walls of Harvard University and then the Massachusetts College of Art.

The Fight for Working-Class Unity

No less than black workers, many white workers also live one or two paychecks away from the street. They, too, have rent or mortgage payments, car notes and repairs to pay, child support, medical bills, tuition, etc. Admonishing white workers that they are complicit in black oppression and should shed their jobs and other means of survival is, to be kind, not a very realistic way to convey the unity of interests of black and white workers and the need for joint class—and ultimately revolutionary—struggle. Rather than uniting black and white workers, such appeals echo racist lies that white workers' interests are threatened by black equality, the stock in trade of racist demagogues like George Wallace, who had a good chance of winning the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1972 before he was shot and paralyzed, and more mainstream politicians up to the present day. As long as workers are pitted against each other in competition for a limited pool of jobs, the

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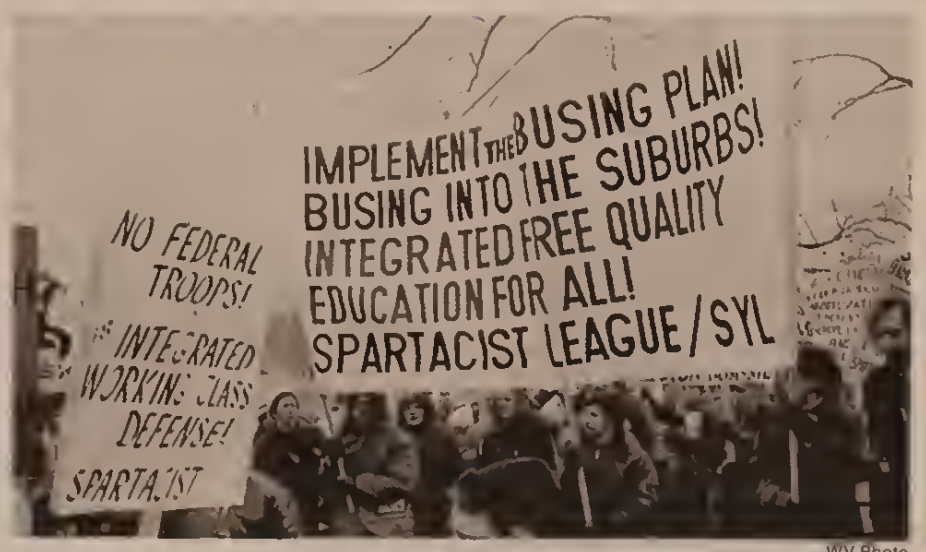


WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at 1974 Boston demonstration calls for integrated workers mobilizations to stop racist attacks on busing for school integration.

Black Freedom...

(continued from page 7)

necessary consequence will be a divided and weakened labor movement.

Since I referred to the 1969 SDS convention, I thought I'd describe our intervention into it. The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus, which was formed by our supporters in SDS, issued a position paper stating:

> "Given the insecurity of white workers, it is necessary to combine demands for equal opportunity for Blacks, with demands aimed at assuring white workers that the benefits accruing to Blacks will not come at their expense. Thus, in demanding that more Black workers be admitted into skilled jobs, we should also raise demands (such as a shorter workweek with no loss in pay) aimed at expanding total employment."

We also pointed out that while fighting against discrimination in hiring, we would oppose firing a white worker to hire a black worker (which would fuel racial antagonisms). At the same time, we pointed out that the upgrading of black workers would provide a higher floor for wages in general and strengthen the position of all workers.

We seek to unite employed and unemployed workers—black, white and immigrant—in common struggle around demands that benefit the class as a whole. We call for union hiring halls, with special union-run programs aimed at reaching out to and training minorities, linked to the fight for jobs for all. The available work should be divided among all those capable of working through a shorter workweek with no loss in weekly pay.

We also seek to mobilize the labor movement to defeat attacks on what social welfare programs remain. However, our program is not the defense of the miserable status quo. At best, welfare (to the extent it still exists) relegates the least skilled section of the unemployed to poverty and exclusion from social production. We oppose the vindictive treatment of exprisoners and support the restoration of their full civil rights. We call for low-rent, quality, integrated public housing and free, quality, integrated public education for all as an essential part of the fight for a workers America. Under revolutionary leadership, struggles for these and similar demands would serve not only to win immediate gains but also to weld the class together and advance its consciousness, pointing toward the need to overthrow the capitalist system.

The Sectoralist Revival and Reparations

At the same time that Ignatin and his cothinkers were writing off the working class, considerable labor discontent and unrest was breaking out on the shopfloor. In 1968, there was a postwar high in wildcat strikes (work stoppages not authorized by the union leadership), especially in the Midwest auto plants.

But rank-and-file hostility to the Reuther regime in the UAW, and to kindred union bureaucracies in other industries, polarized along racial lines. In Detroit, black militants involved in the wildcats formed the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW). The LRBW called for a separate union for black auto workers and combined legitimate demands against the bosses' racist practices (e.g., for more black apprentices in the skilled trades) with demands for more black foremen and other supervisors. Unlike the Panthers and other black nationalists, these militant black workers recognized that black people had social power as part of the industrial proletariat. However, the LRBW union groupings actively discouraged militant white workers from following their leadership and denied membership to whites, who were deemed "the historic enemy, betrayer and exploiter of black people."

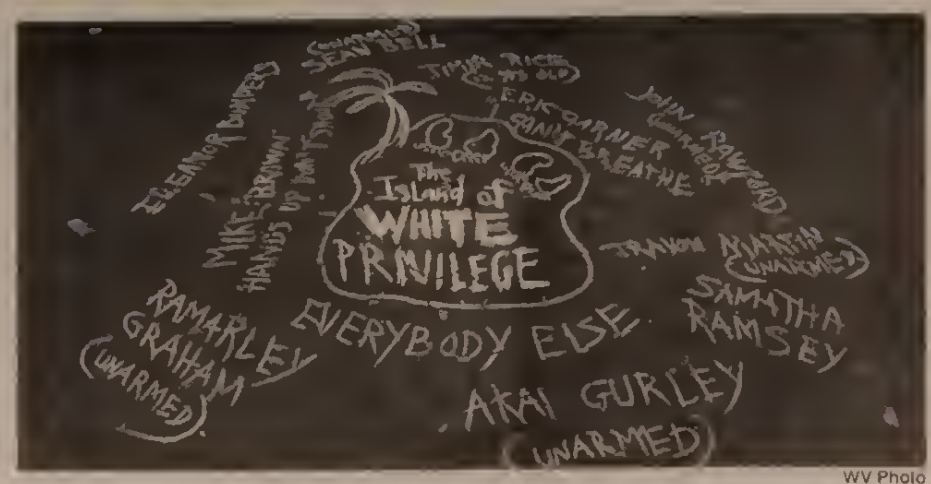
Ultimately, the majority of the LRBW abandoned its connection to labor's social power, leaving the plants in a turn to community work. The LRBW played a big part in penning a "Black Manifesto" presented to the 1969 National Black Economic Development Conference. It demanded reparations of $500 million from white churches and synagogues and called "upon delegates to find within the white community those forces which will work under the leadership of blacks to implement these demands by whatever means necessary. By taking such actions, white Americans will demonstrate concretely that they are willing to fight the 'white skin privilege' and the white supremacy and racism which has forced us as black people to make these demands."

The late 1960s was the heyday of sectoralism: blacks should organize blacks, Latinos organize Latinos, women organize women, gays organize gays. It didn't last long. Some components of the New Left went directly into the Democratic Party, while others were recruited to Marxist organizations. With the now decades-long dearth of any significant social and class struggle, and especially following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, there has been a recrudescence of all sorts of backward ideology, "white skin privilege" and sectoralist identity politics among them. The only difference is that with today's "privilege checking" there is no pretense to revolutionary politics.

Which brings me back to reparations. We do not advocate reparations, which are a completely ridiculous proposition in a society where so many black people can't find jobs, much less get welfare. What is really posed is the need to take the whole pie, that is, expropriate the bourgeoisie. And why stop at black people? From Native Americans to Koreans, there is a very long list of victims of the U.S. capitalist ruling class. The many crimes of the U.S. imperialists stretch from the slaughter in the Philippines at the turn of the last century to the WWII atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the ongoing devastation in the Near East. The only just deserts for the imperialists will be socialist revolution, putting the resources of U.S. society in the hands of the working class and in the service of the oppressed.

The proponents of reparations have an entirely different framework. As seen in the LRBW statement, the demand for reparations has ridden in tandem with the idea of "white skin privilege." Both serve the purpose of laying the responsibility for black oppression not on the capitalist rulers but rather on the white population as a whole, whether desperately poor or in penthouse offices at JPMorgan Chase.

The reparations fad has come, gone and seemingly come again with an article by Ta-Nehisi Coates in the *Atlantic* last year. In making his case, Coates declares: "What I'm talking about is a national reckoning that would lead to a spiritual renewal." He cites as precedent the reparations paid to the Zionist state of Israel by the West German government in the 1950s, adopting the view that all Germans were guilty of the Holocaust. We reject the concept of collective guilt. It was not the German working class that was responsible for Hitler's ascent and the Holocaust but the capitalist rulers served by Hitler, whose first victims included Communists and socialists.



WV Photo

Sidewalk chalking at "Millions March NYC" demonstration against racist police killings, December 2014.

A postulate of the whiteness studies and "privilege checking" crowd is that being white is a choice that one can reject. Coates adopts this outlook in his new book, *Between the World and Me*. He repeatedly refers to white people as "people who believe they are white" and who seek a piece of the "American Dream" at the expense of black people. Meanwhile, in the real world, Rachel Dolezal, then a leader of the NAACP in Spokane, Washington, who identified as black despite having been born white, received a torrent of abuse when exposed for trying to choose not to be white.

Marovich/Bloomberg

July 17: Rural residents line up to receive free medical care at Wise County Fairgrounds, Virginia.

What rejecting one's whiteness is all about is captured in "The White Anti-Racist is an Oxymoron," a June 2003 contribution to Ignatin's journal *Race Traitor*. Why an oxymoron? According to the author, to be white means to accept domination over non-whites; but even if you oppose this domination, you can't ***not*** be white because you are white! So what can one do? The author has an answer: sympathetic whites "must be willing to do what the people most affected and marginalized by a situation tell them to do." The writer added, "Don't call us, we'll call you. If we need your resources, we will contact you." In the same vein, a leaflet passed out earlier this year at a Baltimore rally protesting the killing of Freddie Gray was titled "How to be a White Person in Solidarity With the Baltimore Uprising." It asserted, "We are all upset about the injustice our fellow Baltimoreans face, and it is important to speak out against that injustice. But when you are supporting a movement led by oppressed peoples it is vital that you follow their leadership."

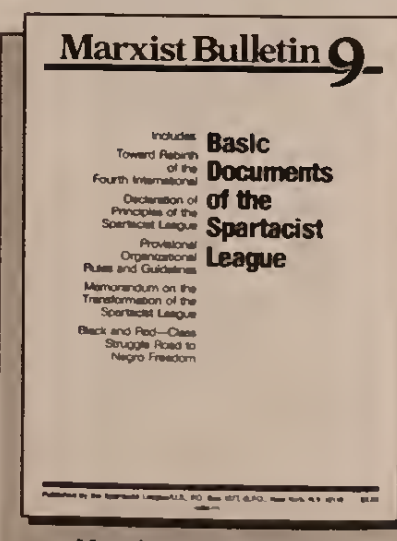
For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

This worldview, which rejects the multiracial working class as the agent of revolutionary change, necessarily leads to seeking redress through bourgeois electoral politics as well as placing oneself in bed with the agencies of the capitalist state. This is precisely where the black nationalist and New Leftist predecessors (and in some cases, braintrusters) of today's activists ended up. For example, in a June 19 *New York Times* interview, Black Panther Party cofounder Bobby Scale offered: "On the Black Lives Matter, I'm pushing for the youth in these groups to get more political and more electoral; you've got to take over some of these seats. And you've got to get more [Baltimore state's attorney Marilyn] Mosbys elected to some of these political offices. And you got to put some measures on the ballot."

While the spawn of Ignatin & Co. were busy checking their privilege, the Spartacist League, together with our trade-union supporters and associated organizations, the Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black Leagues for Social Defense, have engaged in work to impact the real world. Our comrades and allies organized workers defense guards in Chicago for a black worker beset by racist mobs when he desegregated a white neighborhood, mobilized auto workers to drive Nazi foremen out of a Detroit plant and initiated numerous labor-centered mobilizations against the KKK and Nazis. We revived a program, dating back to the early American Communist movement, of support to class-war prisoners—many of them former Panthers. We also launched an international campaign to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a onetime Panther spokesman who spent 30 years on death row for a crime he didn't commit before a federal court overturned his sentence, only to condemn him to what appears to be a rapidly approaching death behind bars.

We're old school; we continue to look to the social power of the multiracial working class. The workplace remains the most integrated part of American society. Black workers are the most militant, experienced and advanced sector of the proletariat. They have the potential, ***when armed with a revolutionary program***, to lead the working class to smash this capitalist system that is a hell for just about everyone. As we concluded in "Black and Red":

> "The victory of the socialist revolution in this country will be achieved through the united struggle of black and white workers under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard party. In the course of this struggle unbreakable bonds will be forged between the two sections of the working class. The success of the struggle will place the Negro people in a position to insure at last the end of slavery, racism and super-exploitation."■



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Greece...

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principle any support to Popular Unity (LAE), the split from Syriza. LAE is a bourgeois-populist "front" trying to salvage the muddied anti-austerity banner that Syriza trampled within months of their election.

LAE leader Lafazanis and Co. do not offer any kind of working-class alternative to the bourgeois Syriza. They stayed in the Syriza government until Tsipras resigned, demonstrating that they are devoted to maintaining capitalist stability and that their vote against the memorandum was just for show. LAE promises to exit the euro (but not the EU) only *if* it becomes necessary! Yet the events of recent months have made crystal clear that there is absolutely no way forward for the workers and the oppressed of Greece within the straitjacket of the imperialist EU and its instrument, the euro. ***Down with the euro and EU! Rip up the Third Memorandum! Repudiate the debt!***

In order to punish the Greek working people for daring to vote no in the July 5 referendum, the Troika pushed an even more savage program of starvation, misery and humiliation. Syriza accepted this imperialist blackmail. Enough! This crisis cannot be resolved at the ballot box. The only road forward is hard struggle by the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, to repudiate Syriza's sellout. On 17 July the TGG issued a call upon the broadest layers of the workers

Reuters

Golden Dawn fascists rally in Athens, January 31.

movement and its allies to form workers committees of action:

> "The EU and euro must be repudiated. Committees composed of workers from different tendencies and their allies—youth, unemployed, immigrants, pensioners—must be set up throughout the country to struggle for this and toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them. This battle cannot be won within a parliamentary framework.... Break with the Capitalists and their Banks!"

We also call upon like-minded and class-conscious working people throughout the European Union to support these aims and for common class struggle of Greek, German and other European workers against Schäuble, Merkel, Hollande and all the EU criminals!

The International Communist League, of which the TGG is a section, has opposed the EU on principle from its inception. The EU is an unstable consortium—dominated by German imperialism—aimed at driving down the living standards of working people throughout Europe, including in imperialist countries like Germany. The euro is an instrument for economic domination of the major powers over the poorer states. The only way out of the nightmare of recurrent capitalist crises is to unite the workers throughout Europe in struggle to sweep away the imperialist EU through the fight for socialist revolutions here and internationally. ***For a Sociolist United States of Europe!***

In both 2012 and the January election this year, the TGG called for a vote to the reformist KKE [Greek Communist Party] because it had consistently opposed both Syriza and the imperialist EU. But in the July 5 referendum the KKE leadership called on working people to throw away their vote by casting spoiled ballots with the KKE's own slogans. This betrayal stood in direct counterposition to the KKE's stated opposition to the EU. We call on the KKE to repudiate its position on the July 5 referendum. If the KKE does so, we will extend critical electoral support to it in this election.

The KKE's response to the July 5 referendum also went against every other call the KKE has made for a no vote in EU referenda—from the Maastricht Treaty to the Lisbon Treaty. And in 2011, the KKE called for a no vote in the referendum proposed by PASOK's Papandreou on the Second Memorandum (see 3 November 2011 *Rizospastis* [KKE's daily newspaper], front page). The KKE leaders claimed that to vote down the Troika's deal on July 5 was an implicit vote for Syriza's own rotten austerity package. Whether in 2011 or 2015, voting down the Troika's deal was nothing other than a message to the imperialist rulers of the EU to go to hell.

In the lead-up to the July 5 referendum, the TGG issued a statement calling: "Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!" We explained that a yes vote would be a terrible defeat for working people across Europe, giving the imperialist and capitalist rulers the green light to devastate conditions of life even more for millions of people. It would also have made life easier for Syriza, because they could have claimed that a yes vote forced them to impose austerity. The resounding no vote means that Syriza now stand completely exposed as craven bootlickers of the imperialists who capitulated to the Troika despite the popular mandate to reject the deal.

The July 5 vote has served to destabilize the parliamentary order in Greece, providing an opportunity for the working class to come to the fore in struggle. Such struggle must go beyond the bourgeois electoral circus and the strategy of trying to pressure parliament for a return to the pre-Memorandum days. It must point instead toward the need for a revolutionary, proletarian solution to the crisis.

The TGG opposes any support to the electoral bloc of Antarsya and the Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK). These reformists were first a tail on the bourgeois Syriza and are now a tail on the bourgeois-populist LAE. While claiming to oppose Syriza in the January elections, these groups showed their true colors in February when they flocked to pro-government demonstrations in favor of national unity. These demonstrations were aimed at strengthening Tsipras' position in the "negotiations" for the sellout to the Troika. Now Antarsya/EEK whine in their 3 September "Declaration of ANTARSYA/Elections 20 September" that LAE "seems not to have drawn conclusions from the path taken by Syriza." Clearly the reformists of Antarsya and the EEK are also incapable of drawing the appropriate "conclusions." Their election statement calls for a vote against Syriza, New Democracy, PASOK, Potami and Golden Dawn but *not* against LAE. It is clear that Antarsya/EEK want to pressure LAE to become the "new" (i.e., old) Syriza.

Such parliamentary pressure politics pushed by the reformist left throughout the crisis are a dead end. Our call for workers action committees is a call on forces much larger and wider than our own to take up the struggle against the EU and the euro based on the mobilization of the independent power of the working class. It is not a call to pressure forces like LAE to move to the left, nor to elect a more left-wing capitalist government. The demands suggested in our call address the immediate, urgent needs of working people: For jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! For decent pensions for *all* retirees pegged to the cost of living! Quality health care and housing for all! For workers control of food distribution and prices! Abolish the VAT! The capitalists, including their "left" agents like Syriza, have demonstrated that their system is incapable of providing the basic necessities of life for the masses. It is high time that the working class fought to take control of society: Expropriate the banks, utilities, transportation, ports and shipping industry!

If the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed do not see the working class leading such a fight, they will be increasingly attracted to the "radical" solutions offered by the fascists. The fascist Golden Dawn came third in last January's election and now seeks to take advantage of Syriza's sellout to posture as the populist "saviors" of the nation. Golden Dawn is currently feeding off the government's chauvinist abuse of the thousands of desperate immigrants arriving every week, who've risked their lives to make it inside the borders of racist fortress Europe through Greece. In opposition to the racist scapegoating of immigrants by the state and by the fascists, the working class must fight for ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*** Workers committees of action would fight for jobs for thousands of unemployed construction workers building free, quality housing for all those immigrants who've made it here, as well as for the increasing number of homeless Greeks.

The fascists seek to deflect the anger of the dispossessed not only toward immigrants but also leftists, gay people and trade unionists. Their ultimate goal is the physical destruction of the unions and the left, which is why the capitalists keep the fascists in reserve. This makes it urgently necessary to mobilize the social power of the unions and workers more broadly in massive, united-front mobilizations to stop the fascists. ***For workers defense guards to smosh the fascist threat! Defend immigrants against racist attacks!***

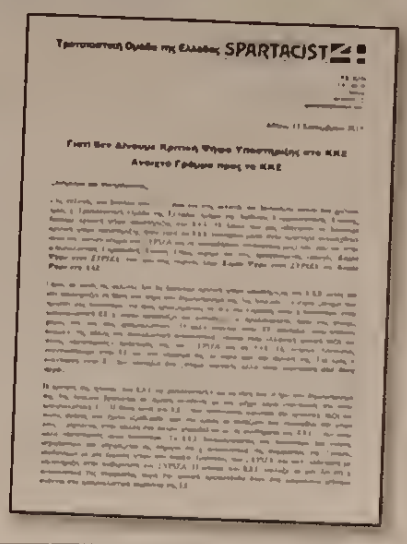
The KKE, despite its social weight in the trade unions, has no perspective of taking the lead in mobilizing contingents of workers, based on the unions, to defend immigrants, leftists and gay people by sweeping the fascists off the streets. Instead it calls to "isolate" the fascists, as if fascism were merely a question of bad ideas. The KKE's nationalist populist program, which is expressed in its calls for "people's power" and for defense of Greece's borders, is an obstacle to combating the populist demagogy of the fascists. It is also a political obstacle to the struggle for the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class, because it chains the working class to its capitalist exploiters.

If many workers today lack revolutionary consciousness, it is not merely because of "objective" conditions, but because of the opportunist character of the existing leadership of the workers movement, and in particular the KKE. What is needed is a revolutionary party like Lenin's and Trotsky's Bolsheviks. Such a party will be forged through the struggle against capitalist ruin and fascist reaction. Such a party cannot be a "national" party, but must form part of one international revolutionary party, with sections in each country. It is the perspective of the TGG to fight for such a party as part of a reforged Fourth International. ■

Open Letter to the Greek Communist Party

Why We Are Not Giving Critical Support to the KKE

In the July 5 referendum on European Union-dictated austerity measures, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) refused to call for a no vote, instead telling voters to spoil their ballots. Our comrades in the Trotskyist Group of Greece issued an open letter on September 13, explaining that they will not give critical support to the KKE in the September 20 elections unless it repudiates this betrayal. The letter can be read at icl-fi.org.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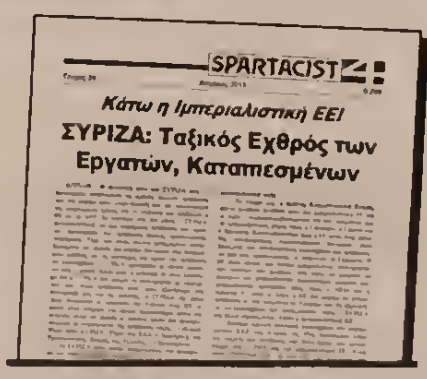
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Australia...

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makes the wheels of production turn. By withdrawing its labour the proletariat can choke off the bosses' profits. The proletariat's place in production uniquely endows it with the potential puwer and interest to put an end to the system of exploitation by shattering the capitalist order and rebuilding society on an egalitarian socialist basis. Supporters of the Spartacist League/Australia who visited the pickets have found some workers open to our arguments against reliance on the courts and for independent class struggle. But the workers' desire to fight is being kept in check hy a union leadership committed to class collaboration.

The leadership's strategy is a losing game. In fact, the MUA leaders' approach in the HPA dispute is a carbon copy of what they did during the 1998 struggle against anti-union attacks by Patrick Stevedores. Then, the result was almost half the Patrick workforce losing their jobs and a growth in casualisation, rolling hack employment conditions to what they were in the decades before militant union struggles had won some measure of job security. Particularly over the last three decades, beginning with the Hawke/Keating Australian Labor Party (ALP) governments (1983-1996), the ALP-loyal union mislcaders have acceded to the slashing of wages, conditions and jobs. After each round of givebacks, the capitalist rulers invariably come back for more.

The ALP is the key political obstacle to advancing the ability of the proletariat to fight against capitalist rule. Based on the unions, but with a thoroughly procapitalist leadership and program, the ALP serves to tie the proletariat to the interests of the bourgeoisie and its state. At the same time, they make a pretenee of representing the interests of workers, as did ALP leader Bill Shorten when he turned up for a photo-op at the picket outside Hutchison Ports in Sydney. Historically, a key Laborite means of selling out workers' struggles has been to preach faith in Australia's Arbitration system, which mandates settlement of industrial disputes in supposedly neutral courts. The fact that the MUA and HPA have now deferred the federal court hearing and agreed to a six-week period of conciliation in the Fair Work Commission is cold comfort to the sacked workers.

For Union Control of Hiring—Equal Pay for Equal Work!

The dispute at Hutchison highlights the need for union control of hiring such as exists (albeit increasingly subverted) for longshoremen organised by the International Longshore and Warchouse Union (ILWU) on the West Coast of the U.S. Through a series of hard class hattles, beginning in 1934, against the shippers and their corrupt gang bosses, the ILWU and union allies won union control of hiring (see the Spartacist League/U.S. pamphlet *Then and Now*). The hiring hall and ILWU-run job dispatch were set up to equalise work opportunities amongst all longshoremen and to maximise pay and benefits at the highest rates. Over the past 60 years, the ILWU bureaucrats have acceded to the division of the workforce into categories (e.g., "steady men," "A men," "B men" and casuals), undermining the equal distribution of work. The hiring hall system, when linked to the struggle for equal pay for equal work and equal manning levels at all ports, cuts directly against the shipping and stevedoring companies' attempts to divide workers, and against layoffs like that at Hutchison.

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San Francisco, 1934: Strike by longshoremen and seamen, which sparked citywide general strike and led to establishment of ILWU hiring hall.

In Australia, there was a measure of union control over hiring on the docks from the 1940s through to the 1980s. However, beginning in 1989 under the Hawke Labor government's Waterfront Industry Reform Authority, a deal between the government, unions and stevedoring employers resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs and the weakening of union influence over hiring. This shift to company-based employment was a major loss for wharfies [longshoremen]. It served to undercut industry-wide union solidarity, while enhancing the ability of the employers to hire and fire. Currently, on the Australian wharves, the stevedoring companies hold most of the aces. Union control of hiring is a necessary goal, but winning it will take a major class battle.

The current misleaders' strategy of suiting up in the bourgeois courts and playing by the bosses' rules can only pave the way for more defeats and a further weakening of the union movement. To take on and beat union-busting attacks, like those levelled by HPA, requires a seriously organised class-struggle fight. At Hutchison this means stopping work with the backup of mass pickets and bans on all ships rerouted from Hutchison Ports to other stevedoring companies until all sacked workers are reinstated at full union wages and conditions. In the face of the company's automation drive, it is necessary to fight for a shorter work week with no loss in pay. Such a fight points to the need for a politieal struggle tu replace the current Laborite misleaders with a class-struggle leadership of the unions that would reject the servile legalism of the union tops and declare no reliance on the bosses' courts. The capitalist state—its courts, cops and military—are not some independent arbiter but the repressive apparatus of the capitalist rulers. The job of this state is to enforce, including by violence, exploitative capitalist class rule over the workers and the oppressed.

For Proletarian Internationalism

Waterfront workers internationally have been following the MUA struggle against HPA's attack on the union. They know that this attack is part of a broader offensive by maritime bosses the world over to smash unions in order to cut labuur costs and increase profits. In 2013, the MUA sent a delegation to Hong Kong in solidarity with Hutchison dockworkers who were on strike against their pitiful wages and inhuman working conditions. After a 40-day struggle, the strikers won a 9.8 percent pay increase. This year, the Hong Kong dockworkers gained a further 5.5 percent pay increase as Hutchison sought to avert further strike action. Reporting on the 2013 stoppage, the MUA revealed that during 12-hour shifts, crane operators were not alluwed to leave their cabins, even to use the bathroom. They were given buckets instead! The company had also installed surveillance cameras in the cabins, as well as alarms to harass workers if they slowed down. As one crane operator said, "When you get into that metal cage, there's no difference between you and a dog."

These are the conditions that the union-busting stevedoring and shipping conglomerates would like on all the seas and ports across the globe. In this, they are ably assisted by reactionary governments such as the Liberal/National Coalition government of Tony Abbott in Australia. Escalating its attacks against the MUA, the Ahhott government has prepared legislation to dercgulate coastal shipping. If successful, this would mean the loss of hundreds of unionised seamen jobs and the proliferation of so-called "flag of convenience" shipping manned by unorganised and heavily exploited seafarers on starvation wages with little or no rights. Against a "race to the bottom," it is vitally necessary that maritime unions such as the ILWU and MUA take eoncrete actions to assist union organising amongst seamen and dockworkers around the world. It is a good thing, for example, that longshoremen at Panama Ports—a subsidiary of Hutchison—recently affiliated to the ILWU, leading to an immediate improvement in their pay and conditions.

The history of the Australian waterfront includes numerous examples of powerful international solidarity actions. Following WWII, as Dutch and Allied imperialists sought to move troops and supplies into Indonesia to shore up Dutch colonial rule, Australian and New Zealand waterfront workers, alongside Chinese, Indian and Indonesian unionists, placed hans on Dutch shipping. Known as the Black Armada, this boycott was a powerful impetus to the renewed Indonesian independence struggle. Several times, the maritime unions in Australia slapped bans on the transport of war matériel to Vietnam during the U.S./Australian imperialists' dirty losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. In contrast, the ILWU moved American military cargo throughout the Vietnam War, despite the union's paper opposition to it.

The consistent and determined proletarian internationalism required tu improve the livelihoods of workers in ports across the globe is constantly undermined hy the union tops' protectionist poison. Dripping with Australian nationalism, the MUA's current campaign—"Our Coast. Our Fuel. Our Security."—dovetails with their longstanding calls for governments to act against the use of "foreign" products on major projects and against the hiring of overseas workers "at the expense of Australian workers." Such campaigns by the union misleaders are the road to ruin for the MUA. By promoting the lie that workers in Australia have a common interest with Australian-based corporations and the bourgeois state that defends the Australian capitalist rulers' interests, the union tops undermine class struggle, including prospeets of international labour solidarity, and disarm the union in the face of inevitable future attacks by the capitalist rulers.

In opposition to the anti-China vitriol that frequently accompanies the union tops' poisonous chauvinism, we Marxists stand for proletarian defence of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, a historic victory against the Chinese capitalists and their imperialist overlords. Despite the revolution being deformed from its inception by the rule of a parasitic, nationalist bureaucratic caste, it resulted in a collectivised economy, which delivered great social progress to the Chinese worker and peasant masses. Although years of "market reforms," opening the door to large-scale investment by foreign corporations, have led to the emergence of a layer of capitalists on the mainland, China is still not a capitalist country.

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March 1971: Australian maritime workers march against the Vietnam War.

While there are elements of capitalism in China, the economy as a whole is not organised on the basis of capitalist production for profit. The most important sectors of industry remain collectivised and owned by the state. We stand for the unconditional military defence of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, against the imperialists' relentless drive to restore the brutal imperialist exploitation that existed before 1949. Key to our defence is the struggle for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats, whose mismanagement and pipedream of "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists fuels the forces of capitalist counterrevolution. Fighting for this program, a revolutionary leadership in China would oppose the Stalinists' "one country, two systems" policy and mohilise to expropriate the Hong Kong tycoons such as the union-hating Li Ka-Shing.

Echoing the nationalism of the MUA bureaucrats, many workers have lahelled Hutchison's actions "un-Australian." Anyone who thinks that workers will get a better deal from an "Australian" or "local"

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Karl Marx...

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standpoint of development; (3) it regarded the "human essence" in the abstract, not as the "complex of all" (concretely and historically determined) "social relations", and therefore merely "interpreted" the world, whereas it was a question of "changing" it, i.e., it did not understand the importance of "revolutionary practical activity".

Dialectics

As the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, and the richest in content, Hegelian dialectics was considered by Marx and Engels the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. They thought that any other formulation of the principle of development, of evolution, was one-sided and poor in content, and could only distort and mutilate the actual course of development (which often proceeds by leaps, and *via* catastrophes and revolutions) in Nature and in society. "Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics [from the destruction of idealism, including Hegelianism] and apply it in the materialist conception of Nature.... Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich [this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.!] and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis Nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical.

"The great basic thought," Engels writes, "that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away...this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things.... For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything, nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendency from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain." Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought".

This revolutionary aspect of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "does not need any philosophy standing above the other sciences". From previous philosophy there remains "the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics". Dialectics, as understood by Marx, and also in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *non*-knowledge to knowledge.

In our times the idea of development, of evolution, has almost completely penetrated social consciousness, only in other ways, and not through Hegelian philosophy. Still, this idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel's philosophy, is far more comprehensive and far richer in content than the current idea of evolution is. A development that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis ("the negation of negation"), a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions; "breaks in continuity"; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest and indissoluble connection between *all* aspects of any phenomenon (history constantly revealing ever new aspects), a connection that provides a unified, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws—these are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of development that is richer than the conventional one. (Cf. Marx's letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies", which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

The Materialist Conception of History

A realisation of the inconsistency, incompleteness, and one-sidedness of the old materialism convinced Marx of the necessity of "bringing the science of society...into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon". Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, then materialism as applied to the social life of mankind has to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being. "Technology," Marx writes (*Capital*, Vol. 1), "discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the immediate process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them." In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as applied to human society and its history, in the following words:

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

"The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

"Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production.... In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society" (cf. Marx's brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: "Our theory that the organisation of labour is determined by the means of production").

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or more correctly, the consistent continuation and extension of materialism into the domain of social phenomena, removed the two chief shortcomings in earlier historical theories. In the first place, the latter at best examined only the ideological motives in the historical activities of human beings, without investigating the origins of those motives, or ascertaining the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, or seeing the roots of these relations in the degree of development reached by material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not embrace the activities of the *masses* of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with scientific accuracy the social conditions of the life of the masses, and the changes in those conditions. *At best*, pre-Marxist "sociology" and historiography brought forth an accumulation of raw facts, collected at random, and a description of individual aspects of the historical process. By examining the *totality* of opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of a particular "dominant" idea or in its interpretation, and by revealing that, without exception, all ideas and all the various tendencies *stem* from the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism indicated the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of the rise, development, and decline of socio-economic systems. People make their own history, but what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people, i.e., what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings? What is the sum total of all these clashes in the mass of human societies? What are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all of man's historical activity? What is the law of development of these conditions? To all these Marx drew attention and indicated the way to a scientific study of history as a single process which, with all its immense variety and contradictoriness, is governed by definite laws.

[COMING UP NEXT:
THE CLASS STRUGGLE]

AP

Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, 2013. Marx pointed to the development of the productive forces as marking human progress.

company would do well to remember the history of brutal profit-gouging by iconic "Australian" companies such as BHP [mining] or CSR [construction materials], or the union-busting conspiracy between the Australian government and the then Australian-owned Patrick Stevedores in 1998. Be they Australia-based or international conglomerates, corporations are in business only to make profit for their shareholders from the sweat and blood of those they employ. The true allies of workers are not the "local" bosses but workers across the country and throughout the world. Workers should be guided by the clarion call put forward by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels more than 160 years ago: ***Workers of the world, unite!***

The multiracial working class in this country and elsewhere need the leadership of proletarian internationalist parties, sections of a reforged Fourth International, to fight for socialist revolutions around the globe. Unlike under capitalism, where automation typically leads to job losses and speedup, under the rule of the working class new technologies will not only serve to increase productivity but allow workers more time to pursue science, the arts or whatever other pursuits take their interest. Free of the grinding exploitation and oppression that define the capitalist-imperialist system, such a society will guarantee that everyone will gain full access to quality training, employment, education, housing and healthcare as part of a truly egalitarian society where the needs of all are fulfilled. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, September 24, 7 p.m.
Finish the Civil War! Black Freedom and the Proletarian Revolution
San Francisco State University
(Meet outside of the Ethnic Studies Building)
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, September 29, 7 p.m.
Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!
CCNY, NAC Rm. 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 7, 7 p.m.
Meet the Marxists
UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.
The Fraud of Capitalist Democracy: Elections 2015
U of T, OISE, Room 4420
252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

Visit the ICL website:
www.icl-fi.org

WORKERS VANGUARD

Greek Elections: No Vote to Syriza or Popular Unity!

Why We Are Not Giving Critical Support to the Communist Party

The bourgeois Syriza party was swept to power in Greece in the January elections based on its anti-austerity rhetoric. Once in office, the government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras caved in again and again to the diktats of the German bankers and the other dominant powers of the European Union (EU). Still, the EU imperialists kept demanding more sacrifices from the Greek people. In a July 5 referendum, Greek voters decisively rejected the latest rapacious "bailout" conditions demanded by the so-called Troika (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund).

AFP

September 5 protest in Thessaloniki against austerity measures imposed by European Union and accepted by capitalist Syriza government.

Yet one week later, the Syriza-led government thumbed its nose at the referendum results, agreeing to a "Third Memorandum" with the EU that included measures even harsher than those rejected in the referendum. Although Tsipras received overwhelming parliamentary endorsement of his rotten deal with Greece's imperialist masters, dozens of Syriza members of parliament voted against the memorandum or abstained, destabilizing the government. Tsipras then announced his resignation as prime minister, triggering snap elections. We reprint below a September 7 election statement issued by our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece.

* * *

The Trotskyist Group of Greece stands opposed on principle to any vote for the capitalist Syriza party in the September 20 elections, just as we opposed it in the elections of 2012 and in January of this year. In power, Syriza proved to be exactly what we said before they were elected—committed to the imperialist EU and an enemy of the workers and the oppressed. We also oppose on

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For Workers Struggle Against the EU!

Australia: Longshore Union Under Attack

SYDNEY, September 7—On 6 August, Hutchison Ports Australia (HPA), the Australian branch of the stevedoring conglomerate of Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-Shing, fired 97 of its 224 workers in Sydney and Brisbane. Under the code name "Phoenix Rising," HPA had for some time been preparing the ground to renege on manning levels previously agreed with the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). By not seeking new shipping contracts and by offloading current contracts to other stevedoring companies, HPA reduced the volume of work to create the "need" for redundancies.

In a blatant anti-union attack, the company then targeted MUA militants and safety committee representatives for the sack [firings], according to maritime workers. Reportedly, the company is now aiming to introduce automation with minimal unionisation. If successful, this would lead to speedup and the slashing of safety and other conditions. Indicative of HPA's fear and contempt for the unionised workforce, the company stationed security guards at its gates to prevent any sacked worker access, even just to clean out their locker.

Picket lines went up the morning after the firings, as maritime workers, other unionists and supporters rallied outside Hutchison Ports terminals. Angry maritime workers in Brisbane briefly occupied the lunch room. In the days that followed, the pickets were visited by many other unionists, leftists, youth and Aboriginal and gay rights activists. In Sydney, the first cargo ship to arrive was sent back out to sea and trucks were turned away by pickets at both Sydney and Brisbane. Having earlier received solidarity statements from ports around the world, Hutchison workers defied orders by the government's union-busting Fair Work Commission to return to work.

Australasian Spartacist

Port Botany, Sydney, August 9: Picket line of maritime workers and supporters, three days after firings of 97 longshoremen.

While the MUA leadership supported the pickets, at the same time they undermined the elementary defensive actions of port workers. Committed to obeying the letter of every anti-union law rather than to waging class struggle, they handed the fate of the fired workers over to the bosses' courts by seeking a federal court injunction to stop the sackings. The union tops directed unionists at DP World and Patrick Stevedores to unload ships diverted from Hutchison. Sowing defeatism among the ranks, they did not demand the reinstatement of all workers but merely condemned the company for not negotiating with the MUA about the firings! On 11 August, MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin, mired in legalism, denied any MUA involvement in establishing pickets, referring to them as a "response from the community."

Two days later, when the federal court granted a temporary injunction against the firings, the MUA tops hailed the ruling as "basic justice." As a "gesture of good faith," the MUA leadership directed HPA workers back to work without any guarantee that the sacked workers would be reinstated. Hutchison's cranes are now operating while the sacked workers, temporarily paid at the base rate, are not allowed through the gates. After sending workers back, the union tops then set up a meeting with Hutchison's management to "find a long-term solution which benefits both the company and its workers."

Pushing such fantasies is standard fare for the class-collaborationist union tops, who energetically promote the *lie* that there can be a successful partnership between labour and capital to the benefit of both. Capitalist society is riven between two main contending classes. The interests of workers, who are forced to sell their labour power to survive, and those of the bosses, who grow fat profiting from that labour power, are irreconcilably opposed. The strength of the working class lies in its numbers and organisation and above all in the fact that its labour

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1075 — 2 October 2015

Blood, Sweat and Tiers

Auto Workers Oppose Sellout Contract

SEPTEMBER 28—As we go to press, members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) are voting in large numbers against the rotten contract that union officials worked out with Fiat Chrysler. Workers are rightly furious at the union tops for their broken promises, chiefly to get rid of the hated two-tier wage system, a blatant affront to the basic union principle of equal pay for equal work. UAW head Dennis Williams and his negotiating team not only failed to (in his words) "bridge the gap," but bent over backward to accommodate management, abandoning the expected 25 percent cap on second-tier workers and introducing third and fourth tiers for Mopar parts workers and axle operators. As one worker at Detroit's Mack Avenue Engine Complex said to the *Detroit Free Press*, "They promised to get rid of the two tier system and they did just the opposite and created a bunch of tiers."

Defiant UAW members should throw the contract back in the faces of the union bureaucrats and prepare for a fight for higher wages, good benefits and an end to tiers. Many workers, wanting to get something back for the sacrifices foisted on them in recent years, especially as part of the 2009 bailout of the auto bosses, have shown a willingness to bring their social power to bear by shutting down production. As the clock ticked down to the expiration of the contract at midnight on September 14, many workers were itching to walk out; when the clock struck twelve, UAW members at one parts plant in California reportedly downed tools, only to be told the contract had been extended. In the lead-up to the contract vote at the Fiat

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U.S. Colonialism Chokes Puerto Rico

Cancel the Debt!

WV Photo

San Juan, September 11: Thousands of public-sector workers demonstrate against further austerity intended to make working people pay for colony's debt crisis.

For the Right of Independence!

After declaring Puerto Rico to be in a "death spiral" of unpayable debt totaling $72 billion, Governor Alejandro García Padilla on September 9 unveiled a five-year economic plan that amounts to more misery and crippling austerity for the Puerto Rican masses. Already this year, Puerto Ricans have been hit with a sales tax increase (from 7 to 11.5 percent), strict water rationing, school closures and rising costs for gas and utilities, while the profit-hungry U.S. creditors and bankers demanded interest payments on their loans in full. Like a nail in the coffin, Padilla's "Fiscal and Economic Growth Plan" is an all-sided assault on health care, education, union rights and the overall standard of living.

Puerto Rico's current debt crisis is a direct consequence of U.S. colonial domination. For the last 117 years, the U.S. rulers have pillaged and exploited the island's land and labor—from the early sugar barons who did away with the coffee, tobacco and fruit harvests in order to use the colony as an oversized plantation, to the post-World War II capitalists who transformed it into a cheap-labor manufacturing base for American corporations. For the last several decades, U.S. businesses have benefited from a litany of tax breaks, while Puerto Rico was forced to borrow from speculators to build local infrastructure and cover the costs of pensions and social services. By the time of the global financial crisis that began in 2007-08, Puerto Rico was already in a deep recession, and the government was unable to repay the bonds it had issued. Wall Street predators and hedge fund vultures soon swooped in to buy up the devalued bonds on the cheap and cash in on Puerto Rican debt.

With an economy tied to the U.S. dollar and the island governed by laws dictated by the U.S. Congress, Puerto Rico has virtually no room to maneuver around the junta of bankers and colonialists who call the shots. The American overlords control the territory's currency, foreign relations, banks, communications, trade relations and shipping. There have been a number of protests against the threatened austerity measures, including on September 11 when *WV* and *Espartaco* salesmen attended a rally in San Juan of thousands of public-sector workers and others against Padilla's plan. Workers in the U.S., squeezed and exploited by the same capitalist ruling class that is choking the Puerto Rican masses, have a clear interest as well in opposing the debt peonage of America's largest colony. What is needed is joint class struggle by workers on the mainland and the island to halt the

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"Karl Marx" by V.I. Lenin

We print below the third installment of "Karl Marx" by Lenin. The first two parts, which gave a sketch of Marx's life and an overview of historical materialism, were published in WV *Nos. 1073 and 1074 (4 September and 18 September). This selection addresses the motor force of history—the struggle between the classes—and also introduces Marx's economic doctrine. Future installments will take up what socialism is as well as tactics to prepare the proletariat for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.*

PART THREE

The Class Struggle

It is common knowledge that, in any given society, the strivings of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, and that history reveals a struggle between nations and societies, as well as within nations and societies, and, besides, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline. Marxism has provided the guidance, i.e., the theory of the class struggle, for the discovery of the laws governing this seeming maze and chaos. It is only a study of the sum of the strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies that can lead to a scientific definition of the result of those strivings. Now the conflicting strivings stem from the difference in the position and mode of life of the *classes* into which each society is divided. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (with the exception of the history of the primitive community, Engels added subsequently). "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat." Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has, in a number of countries, tellingly revealed what actually lies at the bottom of events—the struggle of classes. The Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians ([Augustin] Thierry, [François] Guizot, [François] Mignet, and [Adolphe] Thiers) who, in summing up what was taking place, were obliged to admit that the class struggle was the key to all French history. The modern period—that of the complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, extensive (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap daily press, that is widely circulated among the masses, etc., a period of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc.—has shown even more strikingly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, "peaceful," and "constitutional" form) the class struggle as the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx's *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx demanded of social science as regards an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society, with reference to an analysis of each class's conditions of development: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat." In a number of historical works (see *Bibliography*), Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of *each* individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how "every class struggle is a political struggle." The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and *transitional* stages from one class to another, from the past to the future, was analysed by Marx so as to determine the resultant of historical development.

Corbis

Electronics assembly plant, South Korea. As Marx explained in *Capital*, the aim of capitalist production is "to exploit labour power to the greatest possible extent. As the number of the co-operating labourers increases, so too does their resistance to the domination of capital."

Marx's economic doctrine is the most profound, comprehensive and detailed confirmation and application of his theory.

Marx's Economic Doctrine

"It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society," i.e., capitalist, bourgeois society, says Marx in the preface to *Capital*. An investigation into the relations of production in a given, historically defined society, in their inception, development, and decline—such is the content of Marx's economic doctrine. In capitalist society the production of *commodities* is predominant, and Marx's analysis therefore begins with an analysis of commodity.

Value

A commodity is, in the first place, a thing that satisfies a human want; in the second place, it is a thing that can be exchanged for another thing. The utility of a thing makes it a *use-value*. Exchange-value (or simply, value) is first of all the ratio, the proportion, in which a certain number of use-values of one kind can be exchanged for a certain number of use-values of another kind. Daily experience shows us that millions upon millions of such exchanges are constantly equating with one another every kind of use-value, even the most diverse and incomparable. Now, what is there in common between these various things, things constantly equated with one another in a definite system of social relations? Their common feature is that they are *products of labour*. In exchanging products, people equate the most diverse kinds of labour. The production of commodities is a system of social relations in which individual producers create diverse products (the social division of labour), and in which all these products are equated to one another in the process of exchange. Consequently, what is common to all commodities is not the concrete labour of a definite branch of production, not labour of one particular kind, but *abstract* human labour—human labour in general. All the labour power of

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Enough Papal Bull

As a counter to the media circus around the purported people's pope, we provide a quote by Leon Trotsky:

"But best of all is the papal blessing broadcast to Lourdes by—radio. The paltry miracles of the Gospels side by side with the radiotelephone! And what could be more absurd and disgusting than the union of proud technology with the sorcery of the Roman chief druid? Indeed, the thinking of mankind is bogged down in its own excrement."

—*Diary in Exile* (1935)

(This box is based on one that appeared in *WV* No. 241 [12 October 1979] during the visit of a previous pontiff.)

WV Photo

Popezilla stalks NYC.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint

The closing date for news in this issue is September 29.

No. 1075 **2 October 2015**

Mumia's Life in Danger

Court Blocks Medical Treatment—Free Him Now!

On September 18, federal magistrate judge Karoline Mehalchick issued a recommendation that the district court deny the urgent medical treatment requested by Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner. Mumia has been gravely ill since March, when he was rushed to the hospital on the verge of a diabetic coma. For months prior, he suffered debilitating skin rashes over 70 percent of his body. Ever since, prison officials have resisted Mumia's efforts to obtain adequate medical treatment—including testing for obvious underlying conditions. Mumia had tested positive for the hepatitis C antibody over three years ago, but nothing was done to determine whether the infection was active. When blood tests were finally performed in July, they revealed a diagnosis of active hepatitis C, a condition that can be fatal if not treated, but prison officials continue to deny him the necessary care.

The capitalist state has targeted Mumia since his teenage years in the 1960s, when he was a spokesman for the Black Panther Party. In the 1970s, Mumia worked as a journalist in Philadelphia, where he was known as the "voice of the voiceless" and exposed the racist Philly police vendetta against MOVE, the largely black back-to-nature group he came to support. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Daniel Faulkner. Police and prosecutors manufactured evidence to convict him, including by terrorizing witnesses and concocting a fake confession two months after his arrest. Following a 1982 trial, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. The courts have time and again refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. In 2011, the Philadelphia district attorney's office dropped its longstanding effort to legally lynch Mumia, instead condemning him to the "slow death row" of life without parole.

In the recommendation, Mehalchick declared with stunning cruelty that Mumia will not be "irreparably harmed" by withholding treatment. She further stated that the interests of the Department of Corrections would be damaged because ordering the treatment Mumia has requested would deny his jailers "an opportunity to treat Abu-Jamal's hepatitis C in accordance with their own established protocols." But as prison staff told Mumia in July, *they have no protocol for treating hepatitis C!*

freemumia.com

Mumia and wife Wadiya in April.

According to the judge, immediate treatment is not warranted, "especially given the fact that it often takes significant time for hepatitis C to progress." In Mumia's case, the disease has already progressed: tests performed over the last several months have revealed "significant fibrosis" (scarring) and deteriorated function of the liver. Other long-term effects of the disease, some of which Abu-Jamal has already experienced, include skin sores, inflammation of the kidneys and type 2 diabetes. He has also reportedly lost 25 pounds in recent months and is confined to the SCI Mahanoy prison infirmary. The state seems intent to allow the disease to "progress" until Mumia is dead.

Medical neglect of those incarcerated in America's dungeons is widespread. One in six prison inmates is infected with hepatitis C. Although a drug regimen approved by the Food and Drug Administration has a success rate of 95 percent, prison officials are reluctant to shell out for the costly drugs. This grotesque treatment of prisoners is exacerbated many times over for those, like Mumia, locked away for fighting against this racist capitalist order.

The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has long fought for his freedom. Key to Mumia's defense is the support of organized labor. Unions including the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, the Oakland Education Association, the New York Metro Area Postal Union and the National Writers Union have recently issued statements demanding that Mumia be given the medical treatment he desperately needs.

In a September 16 letter to the Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections, the PDC declared: "As this is a matter of life and death, we demand that Mumia Abu-Jamal be released immediately so that he can secure appropriate treatment." We urge union militants, fighters for black freedom and student activists to demand freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Send letters of protest to Secretary John Wetzel, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. ■

Letter

On China, Vietnam and Nationalism

Brooklyn, NY
20 June 2015

Dear WV:

While I agree with most of the "facts" you present in your June 12 article ("Defend China Against U.S. Military Provocations!" [*WV* No. 1070]), I find it a bit short-sighted historically. Quite aside from whether or not China and Vietnam are "workers' states", history has shown (and you will agree) since 1945 that "workers' states" are generally quite incapable of transcending their interests as nation-states. This was clear in the lack of cooperation among the Comecon states before 1989, and it is clear today in what you call the "treacherous alliances" China and Vietnam have made over the years with the U.S. imperialists. Vietnam's hostility to China did not begin in the 20th century, but is based on 1000 years of dealing with different phases of Chinese aggression and occupation under various modes of production. You recall Ho Chi Minh's remark in 1945 (I quote from memory), when he agreed to British and French troops (but not the armies of the Kuomingtang) occupying Vietnam and returning Indochina to French colonialism: (and this while he was overseeing the massacre of the Trotskyists who opposed this policy): "The British and French will return, and then they will leave. Otherwise we will have our faces in Chinese shit for much longer." What the Vietnamese call the "American war" (1954-1975) is largely forgotten there, but the much older historical enmity towards China is not. As a forgotten "statesman" once said, "countries have no friends, only interests."

Loren Goldner

***WV* replies:**

The social overturns that took place in East and Central Europe, China, North Korea and later Vietnam, Cuba and Laos swept away capitalist rule, creating workers states that Trotskyists have always defended unconditionally against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. But to Loren Goldner, the class character of such countries is irrelevant, based on his claim that since 1945 "history has shown" that they are "incapable of transcending their interests as nation-states." His arguments partake of standard bourgeois ideology in this era of the so-called "death of communism," projecting that any fight for social revolution is futile.

Goldner presents national antagonisms as eternal and immutable. History shows the contrary. In the 1917 October Revolution, the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky led the proletariat to power in Russia, building a workers state comprising myriad nations and ethnic minorities that had been brutally oppressed in the tsarist "prison house of peoples." The Bolsheviks went on to found the Communist International in 1919 in order to forge revolutionary parties to lead the fight for a world socialist order. Unlike early Soviet Russia, the workers states established after 1945 were deformed from the outset, ruled by nationalist bureaucracies patterned after the Stalinist regime that usurped political power in the USSR beginning in 1923-24. Yet despite bureaucratic rule and unable to overcome material scarcity, these revolutions were historic gains for workers and the oppressed. In Tito's Yugoslavia, for example, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosnians and others lived peacefully until a wave of counterrevolution in East Europe touched off nationalist conflicts in Yugoslavia and destroyed that workers state. Our defense of the deformed workers states includes a perspective of proletarian political revolutions to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies and install regimes of workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. The construction of a global communist society, which crucially requires socialist revolution in the most advanced industrial countries, will lead to the disappearance of borders and national distinctions.

Foreign Languages Press

Beijing: Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers at mass rally to oppose the U.S. war against Vietnam.

Renouncing this perspective, the Chinese, Vietnamese and other Stalinist

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IG on Greece: Bridge to Fourth Reich

The mass of the Greek population is being ground under the heel of the imperialist-dominated European Union (EU). Over the last five years, harsh austerity measures dictated by the EU masters and enforced by their lackeys in the Greek capitalist government, currently represented by the misnamed Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza), have slashed wages to the bone, destroyed jobs (leaving over half of all youth unemployed), starved pensioners and devastated the economy. With the "Troika"—the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund—demanding even more savage cuts, over 60 percent of the Greek population voted "no" to accepting the imperialists' diktats in a July 5 referendum.

Opposition to the EU and the euro is fundamental to the defense of the working class and oppressed. The EU is a consortium of capitalist powers whose purpose is the increasing subjugation of the working class throughout Europe and the domination of the weaker EU countries by the imperialist overlords, for which the euro is an instrument. As our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece argued in a statement titled "In the Referendum We Say: Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!":

> "A 'yes' vote would be a victory for the imperialist rulers and the Greek bourgeoisie and a terrible defeat for the working people of Greece and throughout Europe. It would be used by the EU to further devastate conditions of life for millions. A 'no' vote would help rally the working people in Greece and throughout Europe against the EU capitalists and their bloodsucking banks."

We of the International Communist League seek to foster common class struggle of workers internationally, in this case especially in the imperialist centers of Germany, France and Britain, against the capitalist exploiters.

In contrast, the Internationalist Group (IG) argued that there was no choice for Greek workers in this referendum. While allowing that a "yes" vote "would mean abject surrender to the Brussels bureaucrats, Frankfurt bankers and vicious Berlin politicians," the IG argued that a "no" vote was nothing but "a vote to politically support the Syriza government" headed by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras ("Defeat the Bankers' Diktat, Occupy the Banks and Ports!" internationalist.org, July 2015). But the question posed in the referendum was not "for or against" the bourgeois-populist Syriza government; it was "for or against" the Troika's vicious austerity program. To have opposed taking a side on this straightforward question was nothing less than a betrayal, a capitulation to the EU imperialists, centrally the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, which holds the whip hand in Europe.

For all its hot air urging the Greek workers to occupy the banks and the ports, the IG's neutrality in the referendum ran counter to the class interests of the Greek proletariat, the mass of whom voted "no" as a statement of defiance of the EU. Congratulating itself for resisting "the pressure of mass sentiment," the IG proclaimed that the Syriza government's surrender to the EU demands in the aftermath of the referendum "validates our refusal to call for a 'no' vote" ("The Naked Rule of Finance Capital," internationalist.org, July 2015).

On the contrary, had the "yes" vote won, the EU and Syriza would have been delivered a ***mandate*** to impose even greater devastation on the working class. Instead, the resounding "no" vote and Syriza's capitulation to the Troika served to expose Tsipras & Co. as the craven bootlickers of the EU imperialists that they are. The IG can't even get its story straight. Despite arguing that to vote "no" was to "politically support the Syriza government," they wrote following the referendum that the overwhelming victory of the "no" vote was a "humiliating defeat" for Syriza. Although Syriza was re-elected last month, the voter turnout was the lowest in decades, speaking to widespread disaffection following the sellout by that bourgeois party, which has falsely been seen by many workers as resisting the ravages of the EU.

AFP

Bösebrücke bridge, Berlin: German chancellor Angela Merkel at November 2009 celebration of capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany. Internationalist Group's call for abstention on Merkel's austerity diktats was capitulation to imperialist EU.

The IG on the EU: No Exit

The IG argues, "Unlike Euroleftists like SYRIZA, authentic Trotskyists have opposed the imperialist European Union from the beginning." Leaving aside that Syriza is a bourgeois party, it is indeed true that authentic Trotskyists have always, and on principle, opposed the EU. That has been the position of our international organization, the International Communist League (and its predecessor the international Spartacist tendency) from the beginning. Not so the IG, which from the beginning of Greece's debt bondage to the EU has argued against its breaking from the EU and euro. As the IG wrote in a December 2010 article titled "Greece on the Razor's Edge": "To call for Geece [sic] to exit the EU and drop the euro in favor of the drachma" is "a ***bourgeois nationalist*** demand, with negative consequences for Greek workers."

There are some bourgeois spokesmen and economists who promote "Grexit" as the best way to preserve capitalist profits. Our purpose in calling for Greece out of the EU and euro proceeds from an entirely different standpoint: what is in the best interests of our class, the proletariat. As we argued in "Greece: For Workers Struggle Against EU Starvation Diktat" (*WV* No. 1072, 7 August):

> "Repudiating the debt and leaving the EU would of course not end the exploitation of the working class by the Greek capitalists, nor would it free this dependent country from the ravages of the global imperialist system. However, it would create more favorable conditions for the working class to struggle in its own interests. Moreover, Greek exit from the EU would undermine that entire imperialist-dominated bloc. What is needed is a Socialist United States of Europe!"

Amplifying its earlier theme of Grexit's "negative consequences," the IG echoed the EU imperialists' scaremongering campaign in the lead-up to the Greek referendum. Presenting its own "apocalypse now" scenario, the IG argued that leaving the EU would mean "austerity with a vengeance" and conditions even worse than the devastation that has been wrought by the EU and the Greek bourgeoisie. They argue that there is no way out of debt peonage for the Greek working class and oppressed short of a Europe-wide workers revolution.

At a recent IG forum in Mexico, given by its *lider máximo* Jan Norden, a comrade from our Mexican section, the Grupo Espartaquista de México, exposed the IG's counterposition of socialist revolution to a Grexit as empty radical bombast covering for a position that is at best defeatist if not outright reactionary. Noting that Greece has even less national sovereignty today than neocolonial Mexico, he asked if the IG was opposed to Mexico breaking from the 1994 NAFTA treaty that ushered in that country's wholesale "free trade rape" by U.S. imperialism. Our comrade added: Did Norden counsel that short of working-class revolution the Mexican workers and peasants must endure NAFTA's devastation?

In the past, the IG has attempted to square the circle by describing Greece as part of the imperialist club, writing: "Along with the Greek tanker and freighter fleet, Greece's banks are key to its status as a second-rate imperialist power, financially dominating the southern Balkans and with strong positions in the Near East" (internationalist.org, July 2011). Recent events have made a mockery of such ludicrous alibis for the actual imperialists who have trampled on Greece's sovereignty. Far from being financial heavyweights, the Greek banks were forced to close for three weeks in July while the Troika haggled over loans and debt payments.

In stoking fear over Greece leaving the euro, the IG howls against our pointing to Argentina, whose economy recovered from bankruptcy in 2001 by decoupling its currency from the U.S. dollar. Are we to presume that they consider being tied to the Yankee dollar a better alternative? A country's control over its currency is an elementary prerequisite for national sovereignty. Yet the IG argues that our use of the example of Argentina puts us "in the business of offering advice on how to handle the capitalist crisis within the framework of capitalism."

To the contrary. The Greek bourgeoisie has lined its own pockets as the loyal servants of the EU. Grexit would set the stage for further exposing these predators for what they are: like the imperialists, the class enemy of the Greek workers. It would help break workers from Greek nationalism, the lie that the workers and their "own" exploiters have a common interest. This same lie is pushed by the fascist Golden Dawn and other reactionary forces, which currently posture as defenders of the Greek "nation" against the imperialist EU. For purported proletarian revolutionaries in the imperialist centers to argue that it would be a catastrophe if Greece were to break from its subjugation to the EU is nothing short of chauvinism and an acceptance of Greece's debt bondage to the EU.

For Workers Action Committees!

The resounding "no" vote in the July 5 Greek referendum destabilized the parliamentary order in that country, providing an opening for the working class to come forward in struggle. On the other side stand the Golden Dawn fascists who, especially in the absence of such struggle, seek to take advantage of Syriza's sellout to its EU masters through appeals to the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed youth. Ominously, Golden Dawn placed third in the September 20 elections with nearly half a million votes.

Seeking to strike a flint to ignite proletarian struggle, our comrades of the TGG issued a call for workers action committees "composed of workers from different tendencies and their allies—youth,

IG Smear Job

The Internationalist Group (IG) recently issued a new, lengthy work of fiction titled "Document of the First National Conference of the Internationalist Group" (*The Internationalist*, June 2015), tellingly held two decades (!!) after the IG's founding by former Spartacists who defected from Trotskyism. Buried in the bombast is the smear that the Spartacist League showed "sneering racism" against immigrant members of the IG. No evidence for this complete fabrication could possibly be offered, and none is. It is pure provocation to be peddled among Third World nationalists, reformist leftists and who knows what other opponents of revolutionary Marxism. In short, the big lie provides a cynical justification for our political exclusion and a set-up for violence against us.

It's not the first time the IG demagogues have attempted this kind of provocation. For example, at immigrant rights demonstrations in New York City in 2002, their members screamed that our comrades were "anti-Latino chauvinists." The purported "proof" of this slander was our article "South Chicago: Snapshots of Latino and Black Life" (*WV* No. 786, 6 September 2002)—an article devoted to combating anti-black racism among Latino immigrants and anti-immigrant bigotry among black workers. According to the IG, it was "chauvinism" to acknowledge the existence of anti-black racism among Latinos. Now, in the same document that smears us as racist, they brag about their members "working to defuse tensions between Latino and African American workers." So much for the IG's empty charges!

It is an illustration of the IG's political bankruptcy that they resort to demagoguery and outright falsification. And their transparent lie about us poses the question: why should their own members, much less anyone else, believe them about anything?

unemployed, immigrants, pensioners" to fight to repudiate the EU and euro and to struggle "toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them." Our call sought to mobilize workers around such demands as cancel the debt; for workers defense guards against the fascist threat; and for workers control of food distribution and prices (see "Enough!" *WV* No. 1072, 7 August). Sneering that the TGG's call did not include demands for a revolutionary party or a revolutionary workers government, the IG derided it as a "parody" of Trotsky's Transitional Program ("The ICL on Greece," internationalist.org, August 2015).

In fact, our call drew on Trotsky's appeal for committees of action in France in 1935, while recognizing the differences between the periods. Trotsky's call was issued amid an acute social crisis, a year after fascist gangs had attacked the parliament. Massive strike waves and protests demonstrated the proletariat's readiness to fight. But it was being held in check by the reformist social democrats and class-collaborationist "People's Front" policies of the Stalinists. Calling for building committees of action, Trotsky argued:

> "Committees of action at their present stage have as their task to unite the toiling masses of France in a defensive struggle and thus imbue these masses with the consciousness of their own power for the coming offensive.... Such tasks as the creation of a ***workers' militia***, the ***arming of the workers***, the preparation of a ***general strike***, will remain on paper if the struggling masses themselves through their authoritative organs do not occupy themselves with these tasks.... Only committees of action embracing the most important centers of the country will be able to choose the moment for the transition to more decisive methods of struggle, the leadership of which will be rightly theirs."
>
> —"For Committees of Action, Not the People's Front!" 26 November 1935

The very notion of defensive struggle as outlined by Trotsky is anathema to the "revolutionary offensive" blowhards in the IG. They deride our call for workers committees of action as *"a classic 'minimum progrom'* like those raised by the Stalinists and social democrats for struggle ***within the bounds of capitalism***, aiming to attract reformists with demands they can all agree on." The idea that the demands raised by the TGG—which also included calls to expropriate the banks, utilities, transportation, ports and shipping industry and for jobs for all through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay—are realizable "within the bounds of capitalism" would seem to say more about the IG's own illusions in capitalist class rule.

Cut of the same cloth is the IG's appraisal of our call for workers action committees to mobilize the proletariat and its allies in the struggle "toward a government which will act in the interests of the working people and be subordinated to them." The IG finds this to be "an elastic call for what could amount to 'left-wing' ***bourgeois*** governments." In fact, as our call stressed, "This battle cannot be won within a parliamentary framework." The idea that a bourgeois government of any stripe could be subordinated to the interests of the working class reveals rather more about the IG's "elastic" understanding of which class rules.

OPA

Athens, July 3: Massive demonstration opposing EU austerity. For IG, "no" vote in referendum was simply "vote of confidence" for Syriza government.

Like Trotsky's call for "committees of action," the TGG's call for workers action committees was an application of the tactic of the united front. Appealing for workers from different tendencies to join such committees was an attempt to use our small forces as a lever for broader, and yes at this stage, defensive struggle by the proletariat and its allies. Taking part in such struggle is not conditional on agreeing with the need for a revolutionary workers party or the dictatorship of the proletariat. If formed, such committees would be arenas for vital debates on the way forward involving the different parties that claim to represent the workers' interests and for the fight for revolutionary leadership, that is, a proletarian internationalist perspective and party.

In contrast, the IG presents the fight for proletarian power—presumably with Norden as "commander-in-chief" or, perhaps, the ghost of the late Michel Pablo—as immediately on the agenda, not only in Greece but throughout Europe. Sounds really r..r..revolutionary, but it isn't. In fact, the IG seems to be trying to make time with the Stalinists of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), whom they congratulate for also opposing a "no" vote in the July 5 referendum. Not so long ago, they opposed the KKE's calls to repudiate the debt and leave the eurozone as an example of its "left nationalism." Now, the IG opportunistically salutes the virtues of the reformist, populist KKE for dropping its opposition to the EU and the euro in the referendum.

For our part, the TGG gave critical support to the KKE in the 2012 and January 2015 elections *becouse* it stood in opposition to the EU and to all of the parties, including Syriza, which defended the continuing EU subjugation of Greece. At the same time, we denounced the KKE's pandering to Greek nationalism as a central obstacle to building a proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist party in Greece and its refusal to mobilize its considerable forces in the working class against the Golden Dawn fascists. In the most recent Greek elections, our comrades argued that until and unless the KKE repudiated its opposition to voting "no" in the July referendum, the TGG would not call for a vote to it.

From the confines of their New York City apartments, the IG demands that a working class devastated by the relentless blows of the EU and the Greek bourgeoisie immediately take up the fight for its own class power. In contrast, our purpose is not phony agitation but the struggle to arm the workers with the consciousness, confidence and fighting spirit to wage real combat against the capitalist class enemy. The forces of our Greek section are small, but they have nonetheless fought to address the burning needs of the workers and oppressed and provide them with a revolutionary direction in opposition to their current misleaders.

The IG sneers that the TGG's call for workers action committees is "A Bridge to Nowhere." The truth is that a self-proclaimed revolutionary Trotskyist organization that can't even call for a vote against the diktats of the EU is on a bridge to the Fourth Reich of German imperialism. ■

Letter...

(continued from page 3)

regimes preach the nationalist lie that socialism—a classless society based on material abundance—can be built in a single country. Introduced by Stalin in late 1924, this profoundly anti-Marxist dogma expressed the narrow interests of the privileged caste he represented. The natural corollary of this revisionism is seeking "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism—a program that has led to the betrayal of numerous opportunities for proletarian revolution around the world, undermining the workers states themselves.

However, there is a contradiction between the nationalism inherent in Stalinist ideology and the proletarian nature of the states ruled by such bureaucracies. Deriving their privileges from collectivized property, the Stalinist ruling castes are at times forced to defend those property forms against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, including by giving economic and military aid to other workers states. The example of COMECON (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), a trade bloc of the USSR and several deformed workers states primarily in East and Central Europe, refutes Loren's argument. COMECON's most important component was the exchange of Soviet oil and natural resources—at less than world market prices—for manufactured goods. Moscow was willing to pay economically to support other COMECON states as buffers against imperialism, in the process helping to spur industrialization and higher living standards in those countries, some of which were better off than the Soviet Union.

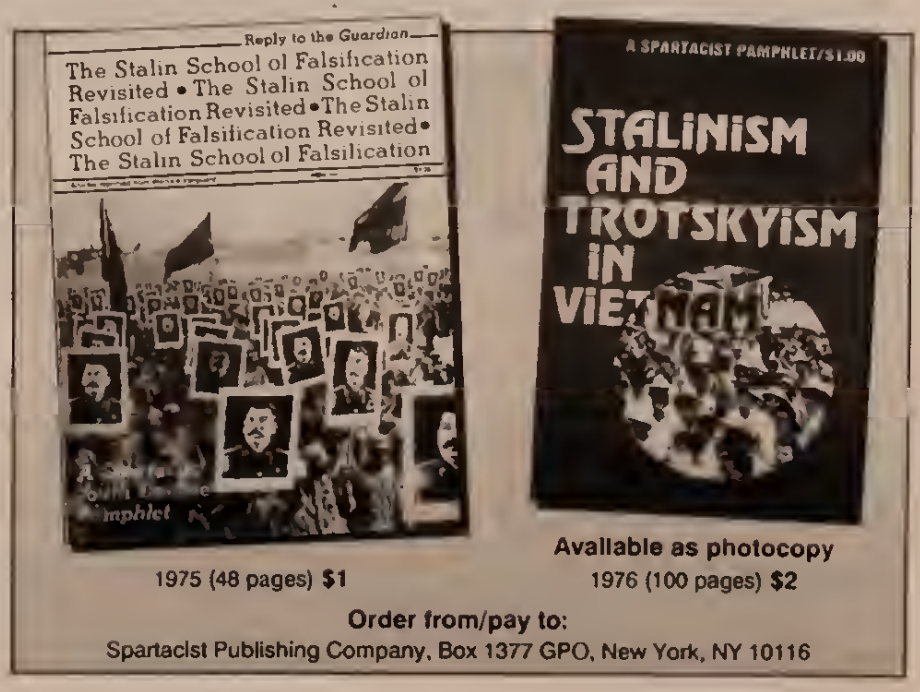
The economic relations between the COMECON countries were a far cry from an international planned economy. In "Economic Nationalism Fractures COMECON" (*WV* No. 495, 9 February 1990), we noted that the bloc's policies were severely distorted by Stalinist nationalism. Nevertheless, COMECON's experience stands in stark contrast with that of capitalist trade blocs like the European Union and NAFTA, which serve to enrich the stronger, imperialist powers (e.g., Germany and the U.S.) at the expense of weaker, dependent countries (e.g., Greece and Mexico).

To try to bolster his case, Goldner recalls a quote, which may well be apocryphal, ascribed to Ho Chi Minh. His intent is to show the Vietnamese Stalinists' supposedly everlasting antagonism toward China. In fact, his citing this anecdote underscores that he sees no difference between a bourgeois state and a workers state. The quote refers to the ***bourgeois*** Guomindang regime, whose murderous rule over China would soon collapse as Chiang Kai-shek and his cohorts fled to Taiwan before the advancing People's Liberation Army. Far from there being a timeless national antagonism, after taking power in 1949 Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP) initially provided a great deal of military assistance to the Vietnamese Stalinists.

This did not mean that Mao's regime had broken from Stalinist treachery. In 1954, Ho's Viet Minh expelled the French colonialists and overthrew bourgeois rule, creating a deformed workers state in North Vietnam. That same year, the Chinese (and Soviet) Stalinists pressured Ho to agree to the division of Vietnam, thus maintaining capitalism in the South. Later, the Maoist regime turned its back on North Vietnam, mainly due to the bitter split between the Moscow and Beijing bureaucracies. This came to a head at the height of the Vietnam War, as China forged an anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. Warning of just such a development, in 1969 we raised the call for Communist unity against imperialism, declaring that this urgent need demanded a fight for political revolution from Moscow and Beijing to Hanoi. The U.S.-China pact was sealed by Mao's welcoming Richard Nixon to Beijing in 1972 as American bombs rained down on Vietnam.

The ludicrous assertion that the war is "largely forgotten" in Vietnam amounts to a breathtakingly false whitewash of the crimes of U.S. imperialism. By some estimates, over 3 million Vietnamese were killed in the "American War." This April 30, the Vietnamese celebrated the 40th anniversary of the workers' and peasants' heroic victory over the U.S., through which South and North Vietnam were reunited as a workers state. The war is commemorated in monuments and museums throughout the country, such as the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. The fact that some 15 percent of Vietnam is still littered by unexploded ordnance (largely from U.S. cluster bombs) makes the war impossible to forget. We condemn the Vietnamese rulers' attempts in recent years to align with U.S. imperialism against China over disputes in the South China Sea. As we warned in the article Loren cites, this rapprochement is a deadly danger to both the Chinese and Vietnamese workers states.

The unrelenting military and economic pressure exerted by the imperialists, compounded by decades of Stalinist misrule, ultimately spelled the end of the Soviet Union as well as the DDR (East Germany) and the other deformed workers states in Europe. Defense of the remaining workers states is a central task for revolutionary Marxists fighting to eradicate capitalist exploitation and oppression from the planet. This is the perspective of the International Communist League as we fight to reforge the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky and his followers in 1938 to carry on the program of the October Revolution. In this effort, we find some inspiration in the young Ho Chi Minh, who took up the banner of the October Revolution while in Paris and then helped plant it in China in the early 1920s as a Comintern militant. ■



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Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 1)

rulers' vicious attacks, beginning with the demand: *Cancel the debt!*

With talk of a looming default, bourgeois politicians have been debating what legal framework to set up in order to renegotiate the debt while forcing austerity down the throats of the Puerto Rican masses. When the Puerto Rican government attempted to enact a bankruptcy law for the island, U.S. federal courts declared the proposal unconstitutional. New York governor Andrew Cuomo and others have called to extend Chapter 9 bankruptcy law to Puerto Rico's municipalities. To see what that would mean, just look at bankrupted Detroit. Under that city's financial restructuring plan, backed by the Obama administration, municipal workers' pensions were looted and social services slashed. Meanwhile, under Governor Padilla's September 9 plan, a financial control board would oversee the implementation of draconian measures resembling those in the infamous Krueger report issued in June by former International Monetary Fund officials.

Padilla's plan includes restricting minimum-wage increases for workers under 25, tightening welfare eligibility, gutting job protections like seniority, cutting paid vacation days for public-sector workers and issuing a freeze on new hiring and collective bargaining. Subsidies for the University of Puerto Rico are being slashed while the collapsing health care system is facing more cuts. Public transportation is slated to be privatized and the island's electrical utility, PREPA, could be deregulated.

Puerto Ricans already suffer from impoverishment: at least 45 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and the per capita income is around $15,000, less than half that of the poorest state, Mississippi. At the same time, workers and the unemployed are saddled with high costs for consumer goods, in no small part due to a shakedown provision of the Jones Act. Enacted almost a century ago, this protectionist legislation mandates that every product that enters or leaves Puerto Rico must be carried on a U.S. ship, or face high tariffs and fees that are then passed on to the Puerto Rican population. The tiny Caribbean island—which relies heavily on imports, including 85 percent of its food—is a dumping ground for U.S. products.

Enduring the weight of national oppression and colonial repression, Puerto Ricans have formal citizenship but are treated by the U.S. rulers with racist contempt as second-class citizens. Residents of the island are used as cannon fodder in U.S. imperialist wars, though they cannot vote in federal elections and have no voting representation in Congress. With few natural resources and now skeletal industry in the colony, the main employer is the government. As jobs and opportunities dry up, a growing emigration from the island threatens to leave an aging and vulnerable population behind. As many as half a million Puerto Ricans have left in the last decade. Today, the total number of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. far exceeds the island's 3.5 million inhabitants.

AP

Homeless man in front of shuttered business on outskirts of San Juan. Colony's impoverishment is consequence of U.S. imperialist plunder.

While there is deep resentment over Puerto Rico's status as a U.S. commonwealth, this anger is contradictory and does not translate into broad support for independence. The majority of Puerto Ricans fear that independence would come at a painful cost—specifically, that they would relinquish the benefits of U.S. citizenship, such as the right to live and work on the mainland. Under capitalist rule, an independent Puerto Rico would continue to be dominated economically by U.S. imperialism, while being forced to compete on the world capitalist market with other small, resource-poor Caribbean islands. Meanwhile, statehood, or direct annexation to the U.S., would aggravate racist nativist hostility toward Puerto Ricans. It would also accelerate the tendency of English to replace Spanish on the island, ultimately threatening the national identity of the Puerto Rican people.

As forthright opponents of U.S. imperialism, we would favor the independence of Puerto Rico in order to take a stand against American colonial domination and fight against chauvinism in the U.S. Likewise, we seek to undercut the nationalist leaders of the Puerto Rican working class, who preach class collaboration with the island's capitalists in the name of national unity. Ending Puerto Rico's formal subjugation would help move beyond the question of the island's status vis-à-vis the American behemoth and could clear the road for revolutionary internationalist class struggle. However, the wishes of the population are an important factor for Marxists in determining how to get the national question off the agenda, and we are against forcing annexation or independence upon the island's population. Therefore, we champion the *right of independence for Puerto Rico.*

El Imparcial

1937 Ponce Massacre exemplifies U.S. colonial repression against pro-independence resistance. Around 20 were killed and up to 200 wounded when police fired into crowd protesting jailing of Nationalist Party leaders.

National Oppression and Colonial Subjugation

Since the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. rulers have claimed the Americas and the Caribbean as their own fiefdom. With the advent of the imperialist epoch, the American bourgeoisie grabbed Puerto Rico—along with other Spanish colonies Cuba, Guam and the Philippines—during the 1898 Spanish-American War. During the Cold War, Puerto Rico was a staging ground for U.S. aggression in the Caribbean—from the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 to the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Grenada in 1983. While the two largest military bases, Vieques and Roosevelt Roads, have closed, the Coast Guard, National Guard and other U.S. troops still remain on the island.

For decades, U.S. forces carried out brutal state repression and crackdowns against Puerto Rican trade unionists, nationalists and others deemed dissidents. The island's 1948 Gag Law, widely used against the independence movement, was modeled on the federal Smith Act of 1940 that made it a criminal offense to advocate the revolutionary overthrow of the government. Using the island as a testing ground for carrying out infiltration, disruption and provocation, federal agents have viciously targeted Puerto Rican *independentistas* for imprisonment and political assassination. We demand freedom for Puerto Rican independence activists like Oscar López Rivera who are imprisoned in the U.S. *All U.S. troops and federal agents out of Puerto Rico now!*

Starting in the late 1940s, Puerto Rico's status became a thorn in the side of the U.S. ruling class. In colonies across the globe, independence struggles were being waged to shake off their respective yokes. The subjugation of Puerto Rico was, along with Jim Crow segregation in the South, a source of embarrassment to the American rulers, who postured as defenders of "democracy" against their Cold War rival, the Soviet Union. To provide the illusion of Puerto Rican self-government, Washington in 1952 labeled the island a "commonwealth"—also termed a Free Associated State (Estado Libre Asociado), as local elections and a constitution were introduced. Puerto Rico, it was claimed, was no longer a colony, even as the U.S. Congress continued to exercise complete authority over the territory.

Under this new form of U.S. colonial rule, a fresh layer of local henchmen and middlemen loyal to U.S. capital came to the fore, including Puerto Rico's first elected governor, Luis Muñoz Marín. His Popular Democratic Party (PPD), today led by Governor Padilla, continues to support commonwealth status. Muñoz Marín promoted the federal government's Operation Bootstrap, a postwar industrialization plan to entice U.S. businesses through tax exemptions and cheap labor (including for a period by waiving federal minimum-wage requirements).

With the 1959 Cuban Revolution, U.S. imperialism tried to prop up Puerto Rico as a free-market miracle and bulwark against Communism in the Caribbean. The Cuban Revolution led to the expropriation of the U.S. and Cuban capitalists and the creation of a deformed workers state. Despite the rule of a bureaucratic caste led by Fidel Castro, the Cuban Revolution, with crucial Soviet military and economic aid, resulted in enormous gains for the country's working masses, including guaranteed housing, free health care and education. Following the revolution,

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Greece: For Workers Struggle Against Capitalist Austerity!

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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For information: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@fastmail.net

CHICAGO

Wednesday, October 7, 7 p.m.

Quaker House
5615 S. Woodlawn Ave.
For information: (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

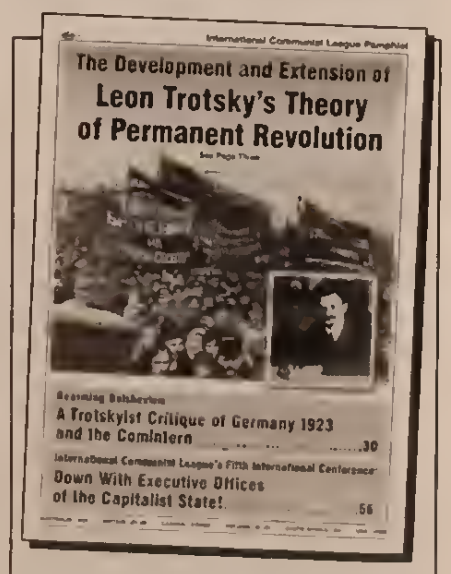
Saturday, October 17, 4 p.m.

Metropolitan Community Church
4607 Prospect Ave.
(One block east of Vermont, near the Vermont/Sunset Red Line Metro Station)
For information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, October 3, 3 p.m.

322 West 48th Street, First Floor
Manhattan
(Between 8th and 9th Avenues—Take A, C or E to 42nd Street)
For information: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net



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a substantial number of *gusano* Cuban capitalists fled to Puerto Rico, soon becoming a reactionary tool for the local establishment's promotion of American anti-Communist interests.

By the early 1990s, with the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the American ruling class no longer saw an interest in providing indirect subsidies to the businesses used to showcase Puerto Rico's economic development—mainly in electronics and pharmaceuticals. In the course of phasing out Section 936 tax incentives, there was an exodus of U.S. operations, with the number of manufacturing jobs falling by almost half since 1996. The outflow of capital worsened conditions of poverty and unemployment, making Puerto Ricans even more dependent on federal programs and benefits.

Today, the Obama administration's easing of relations with Cuba has Governor Padilla and other bourgeois politicians in Puerto Rico bemoaning the possibility of losing out in the competition for U.S. investment and tourism dollars. At the same time, Puerto Rican entrepreneurs have been working alongside the White House to help foster American influence in the Cuban workers state.

Increased commercial and financial ties to U.S. corporations pose the very real danger of strengthening the internal forces for capitalist counterrevolution within Cuba. Nonetheless, from our standpoint as revolutionary Marxists, Cuba has the right to enter into diplomatic and economic relations with any capitalist country it chooses, not least to try to overcome its very real economic isolation. We demand an end to the U.S. economic embargo that aims to starve the small island, and we call for U.S. out of Guantánamo.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban workers state against the threat of domestic counterrevolution and imperialist attack. Yet the necessary defense of Cuba against the imperialists is undermined by the nationalist program of the ruling Havana bureaucracy, which embraces the false Stalinist dogma of building "socialism in one country." The ultimate answer to Cuba's economic backwardness is proletarian revolution across the globe—not least in the imperialist U.S.—that integrates the island into an internationally planned economy. We fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a regime based on workers democracy and committed to this fight for world socialism.

A Revolutionary, Working-Class Perspective

The struggle for the liberation of Puerto Rico must be waged along the axis of proletarian internationalism. In the U.S., we fight to mobilize the multiracial working class against the racist chauvinism fomented by the American bourgeoisie and echoed by the trade-union leaders, which pits sectors of workers against one another. Much of the social power of the Puerto Rican working class is found in the U.S., in heavy metropolitan concentrations in the Northeast and South, and represented in hospital, transit and other unions. These Puerto Rican workers, along with Dominicans, Haitians and others from the region now residing in the U.S., can form a living link to the class struggle of the proletariat in the Caribbean.

Demolix

Banner calls for freedom for imprisoned Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera during this year's Puerto Rican day parade, New York City.

In Puerto Rico, the working class has shown the will and interest to fight back against the recent onslaught of attacks, including through work stoppages and strikes by teachers and transit workers. Back in 2010, a two-month student strike at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) against budget cuts and tuition hikes was supported by key sectors of the working class. That strike, along with subsequent struggles at the UPR, electrified the island and demonstrated the link between the right to education and the fight against job layoffs.

Puerto Rican workers must reject the perspective offered up by the trade-union bureaucracy, which counsels workers to make sacrifices in the so-called national interest. Addressing the debt crisis, an August 22 assembly of leaders and delegates from various trade unions representing teachers, public-sector workers and others adopted a resolution demanding "unity of all sectors of society" to renegotiate the debt. Outlining an entirely legalistic strategy, the resolution declared a commitment "to contribute to solving the problems of Puerto Rico" and recommended measures such as reorganizing the Treasury Department and amending the tax code.

In Puerto Rico, the union leadership's main mechanism for class collaboration is through nationalist ideology, which means chaining the exploited and oppressed to the local capitalist rulers, largely through the bourgeois PPD. Many workers view this party, which is connected to the Democratic Party in the U.S., as the "lesser evil" to the right-wing, pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP). In 2012, PPD governor Padilla was elected on just such a basis after the prior PNP government headed by Luis Fortuño became widely despised for its corrupt mismanagement and massive austerity, including the firing of tens of thousands of public employees, union-busting attacks and a drive to privatize public services. Right after coming into office, Padilla proved his allegiance to Wall Street by promoting new tax incentives to attract private investment. Now he is the ringleader for the next round of vicious austerity.

Puerto Rico is a vivid confirmation of the need for a program that centers on proletarian class independence from *all* wings of the capitalists. This requires a political break from nationalist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces. In the economically backward countries, the bourgeoisies are too weak, corrupt and dependent on the imperialists to resolve essential tasks such as breaking the stranglehold of imperialism. Only through the proletarian seizure of power can there be liberation from imperialist domination and the basis laid to eradicate poverty.

A victorious workers revolution in the U.S., in which class-conscious Puerto Rican workers can play a vanguard role, would immediately grant Puerto Rico independence and massive amounts of economic aid, establishing relations on the basis of its freedom to exercise national self-determination. But the spark of revolution could also come from the colonial or neocolonial countries. Workers struggle in Puerto Rico against U.S. colonial domination could inspire the multiracial working class on the mainland in the revolutionary overthrow of U.S. imperialism.

Only a socialist federation (or federations) of the Caribbean, in the context of world socialist revolution making possible international collectivized planning, can open the road to qualitative economic development for Puerto Rico and neighboring countries that today are under the imperialist boot. For this perspective to become a reality, Trotskyist parties must be built in Puerto Rico and the U.S. as part of a reforged Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. ■

WV Photo

Spartacist sign opposing colonial domination of Puerto Rico at anti-Klan mobilization in NYC, 1999.

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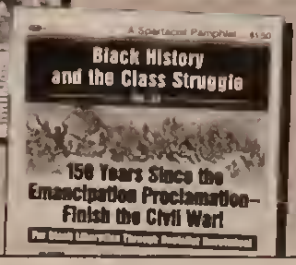

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Karl Marx...

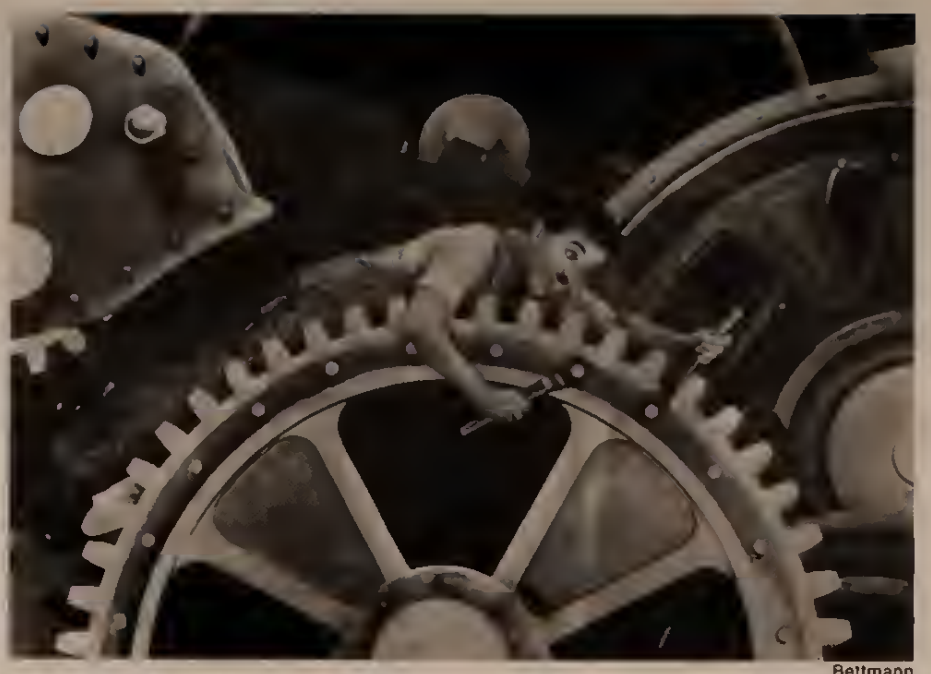
(continued from page 2)

a given society, as represented in the sum total of the values of all commodities, is one and the same human labour power. Thousands upon thousands of millions of acts of exchange prove this. Consequently, each particular commodity represents only a certain share of the *socially necessary* labour time. The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour, or hy the labour time that is socially necessary for the production of a given commodity, of a given use-value. "Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also cquate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it." As one of the earlier economists said, value is a relation between two persons; only he should have added: a relation concealed beneath a material wrapping. We can understand what value is only when we consider it from the standpoint of the system of social relations of production in a particular historical type of society, moreover, of relations that manifest themselves in the mass phenomenon of exchange, a phenomenon which repeats itself thousands upon thousands of times. "As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour time." After making a detailed analysis of the twofold character of the labour incorporated in commodities, Marx goes on to analyse the *form af value* and *money*. Here, Marx's main task is to study the *arigin* of the money form of value, to study the *historical process* of the development of exchange, beginning with individual and incidental acts of exchange (the "elementary or accidental form of value," in which a given quantity of one commodity is exchanged for a given quantity of another), passing on to the universal form of value, in which a number

Library of Congress

Adam Smith

of different commodities are exchanged for one and the same particular commodity, and ending with the money form of value, when gold becomes that particular commodity, the universal equivalent. As the highest product of the development of exchange and commodity production, money masks, conceals, the social character of all individual labour, the social link between individual producers united hy the market. Marx analyses the various functions of money in very great detail; it is important to note here in particular (as in the opening chapters of *Capital* in general) that what seems to he an abstract and at times purely deductive mode of exposition deals in reality with a gigantic collection of factual material on the history of the development of exchange and commodity production. "If we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according to the extent and relative preponderance of the



Beltmann

The capitalist wheels of industry and the alienation of the worker in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936).

one function or the other, to very different stages in the process of social production" (*Capital*, Vol. I).

Surplus Value

At a certain stage in the development of commodity production money becomes transformed into capital. The formula of commodity circulation was C–M–C (commodity–money–commodity), i.e., the sale of one commodity for the purpose of buying another. The general formula of capital, on the contrary, is M–C–M, i.e., purchase for the purpose of selling (at a profit). The increase over the original value of the money that is put into circulation is called by Marx surplus value. The fact of this "growth" of money in capitalist circulation is common knowledge. Indeed, it is this "growth" which transforms money into *capital*, as a special and historically determined social relation of production. Surplus value cannot arise out of commodity circulation, for the latter knows only the exchange of equivalents; neither can it arise out of price increases, for the mutual losses and gains of buyers and sellers would equalise one another, whereas what we have here is not an individual phenomenon but a mass, average and social phenomenon. To obtain surplus value, the owner of money "must...find...in the market a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value"—a commodity whose process of consumption is at the same time a process of the creation of value. Such a commodity exists—human labour power. Its consumption is labour, and labour creates value. The owner of money buys labour power at its value, which, like the value of every other commodity, is determined by the socially necessary labour time requisite for its production (i.e., the cost of maintaining the worker and his family). Having bought labour power, the owner of money is entitled to use it, that is, to set it to work for a whole day—twelve hours, let us say. Yet, in the course of six hours ("necessary" labour time) the worker creates product sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance; in the course of the next six hours ("surplus" labour time), he creates "surplus" product, or surplus value, for which the capitalist does not pay. Therefore, from the standpoint of the process of production, two parts must be distinguished in capital: constant capital, which is expended on means of production (machinery, tools, raw materials, etc.), whose value, without any change, is transferred (immediately or part by part) to the finished product; secondly, variable capital, which is expended on labour power. The value of this latter capital is not invariable, hut grows in the labour process, creating surplus value. Therefore, to express the degree of capital's exploitation of labour power, surplus value must be compared, not with the entire capital but only with the variable capital. Thus, in the example just given, the rate of surplus value, as Marx calls this ratio, will be 6:6, i.e., 100 per cent.

There were two historical prerequisites for capital to arise: first, the accumulation of certain sums of money in the hands of individuals under conditions of a relatively high level of development of commodity production in general; secondly, the existence of a worker who is "free" in a double sense: free of all constraint or restriction on the sale of his labour power, and freed from the land and all means of production in general, a free and unattached labourer, a "proletarian," who cannot subsist except by selling his labour power.

There are two main ways of increasing surplus value: lengthening the working day ("absolute surplus value"), and reducing the necessary working day ("relative surplus value"). In analysing the former, Marx gives a most impressive picture of the struggle of the working class for a shorter working day and of interference by the state authority to lengthen the working day (from the 14th century to the 17th) and to reduce it (factory legislation in the 19th century). Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all civilised countries of the world has provided a wealth of new facts amplifying this picture.

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three fundamental historical stages in capitalism's increase of the productivity of labour: (1) simple co-operation; (2) the division of labour, and manufacture; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is shown incidentally by the fact that investigations into the handicraft industries of Russia furnish abundant material illustrating the first two of the mentioned stages. The revolutionising effect of large-scale machine industry, as described by Marx in 1867, has revealed itself in a number of "new" countries (Russia, Japan, etc.), in the course of the half-century that has since elapsed.

To continue. New and important in the highest degree is Marx's analysis of the *accumulation af capital*, i.e., the transformation of a part of surplus value into capital, and its use, not for satisfying the personal needs or whims of the capitalist, but for new production. Marx revealed the error made by all earlier classical political economists (beginning with Adam Smith), who assumed that the entire surplus value which is transformed into capital goes to form variable capital. In actual fact, it is divided into *means af praduction* and variable capital. Of tremendous importance to the process of development of capitalism and its transformation into socialism is the more rapid growth of the constant capital share (of the total capital) as compared with the variable capital share.

By speeding up the supplanting of workers by machinery and by creating wealth at one extreme and poverty at the other, the accumulation of capital also gives rise to what is called the "reserve army of labour," to the "relative surplus" of workers, or "capitalist overpopulation," which assumes the most diverse forms and enables capital to expand production extremely rapidly. In conjunction with credit facilities and the accumulation of capital in the form of means of production, this incidentally is the key to an understanding of the *crises* of overproduction which occur periodically in capitalist countries—at first at an average of every ten years, and later at more lengthy and less definite intervals. From the accumulation of capital under capitalism we should distinguish what is known as primitive accumulation: the forcible divorcement of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants off the land, the stealing of communal lands, the system of colonies and national debts, protective tariffs, and the like. "Primitive accumulation" creates the "free" proletarian at one extreme, and the owner of money, the capitalist, at the other.

The "*historical tendency of capitalist accumulation*" is described by Marx in the following celebrated words: "The expropriation of the immediate producers is accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and handicraftsman—*Lenin*], that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others.... That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the inmanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under, it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated" (*Capital*, Vol. I).

Also new and important in the highest degree is the analysis Marx gives, in Volume Two of *Capital*, of the reproduction of aggregate social capital. Here, too, Marx deals, not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society, but with that economy as a whole. Correcting the aforementioned error of the classical economists, Marx divides the whole of social production into two big sections: (I) production of the means of production, and (II) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with numerical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital—both when reproduced in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation.

[COMING UP NEXT:
SURPLUS VALUE CONTINUED]

Toronto...

(continued from page 12)

any real justice for the oppressed.

For decades, the Toronto cops have been gunning down blacks, other minorities and the mentally ill. Inquiries, more black cops, civilian oversight boards: all these things have been demanded time and again. Take the recent call for body cameras, for instance. Across North America, the cops are more and more often caught on film executing someone. It doesn't even slow them down. Earlier this year, Toronto saw the appointment of its first black police chief. "A Black face doesn't make it less racist" read a protester's sign in front of Toronto police headquarters; "Carding in Blackface" headlined one article. This is the beginning of wisdom. But activists must come to understand that police violence and racism are intrinsic to class-divided capitalist society and cannot be ended without sweeping away this system. Absent that, the present Black Lives Matter activists will go down the same blind alley as an earlier generation of activists who promoted various schemes to "control" the police.

The Capitalist State and Racial Oppression

This country's rulers, a minuscule, ruthless class, are well aware that there is seething discontent in society that could be ignited by the spark of social protest. They own the banks and major industries, producing nothing themselves but reaping massive profits by further grinding down those still lucky enough to have a job. In order to keep in check the workers they exploit and black people and other minorities they oppress, the capitalist class unleashes its repressive state apparatus—cops, courts and prisons—whose powers it is augmenting. At the same time, the ruling class seeks to disguise what is the dictatorship of capital with the trappings of democracy and the illusion that the capitalist state is some kind of neutral body that represents everyone.

It is impossible to enforce the property rights of the capitalists without simultaneously enforcing dispossession of the workers and the unemployed, among whom blacks and other racial minorities are always overrepresented. The cops that terrorize them are not committing "excesses" or using "disproportionate force." They are merely "doing their jobs" as the guard dogs of racist capitalism. Communist revolutionary V.I. Lenin described the cops as follows:

> "Separated as it is from the people, forming a professional caste of men trained in the practice of violence upon the poor, men who receive somewhat higher pay and the privileges that go with authority (to say nothing of 'gratuities'), the police everywhere, in every republic, however democratic, where the bourgeoisie is in power, always remains the unfailing weapon, the chief support and protection of the bourgeoisie."
>
> —"They Have Forgotten the Main Thing" (1917)

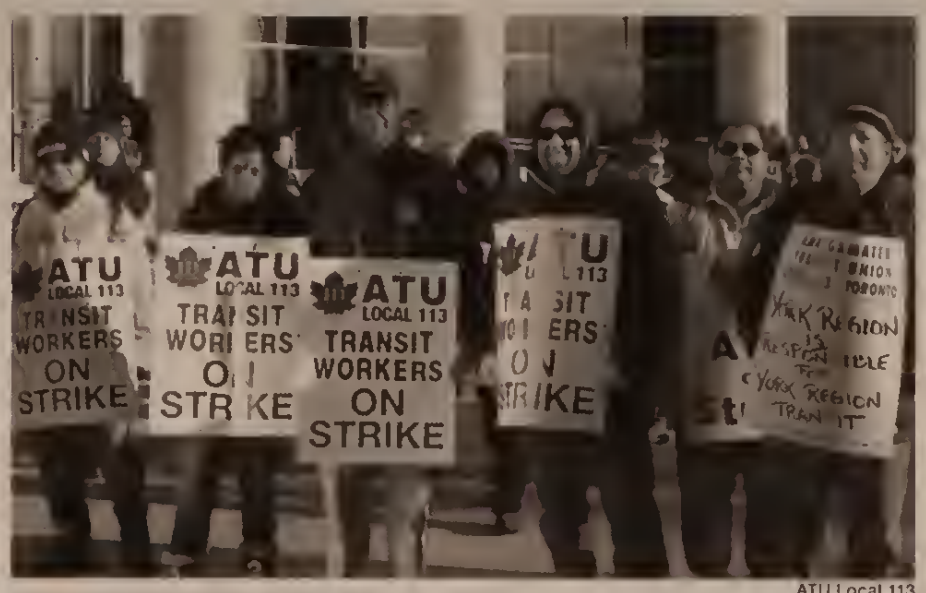
For a Working-Class Fight Against Racist Cop Terror

"The very notion of a black Torontonian conflates hundreds of different languages, histories, traditions and stories," notes Desmond Cole. "In the National Household Survey, the term 'black' is the only classification that identifies a skin colour rather than a nation or region." While some black people in Canada, especially those in Nova Scotia, have roots in this country that go back more than two centuries, an increasingly large number are first- and second-generation immigrants from the Caribbean and various regions of Africa. Jamaicans and Somalis, among the largest black communities in Toronto, live in separate neighbourhoods and share no common language, culture or religion from their countries of origin.

Many black people immigrate here to leave behind the oppression and poverty of their neocolonial countries of origin. Yet once in this country, they find themselves kept down in the lower echelons of the working class—or unemployed. Targeted for police harassment and violence, they make up 9 percent of Canadian prisoners but only 3 percent of the population as a whole. Their harsh living conditions expose the lie of "kinder, gentler" Canada.

Blacks in the U.S. constitute a race-colour caste, forcibly segregated at the bottom of society. That is the legacy of slavery, the bedrock of U.S. capitalism. Whereas slavery existed in Canada, it never became decisive to the economy. That was not due to any moral superiority on the part of the rulers north of the border. In fact during the American Civil War, future Canadian prime minister John A. Macdonald backed the southern Confederacy in its campaign for the expansion of slavery.

Despite their differing histories, the African and Caribbean immigrant diasporas in Canada share with blacks in the U.S. a common experience of pervasive discrimination and police violence on account of their skin colour. Though deindustrialization has led to a brutal increase in long-term unemployment, black people in Canada still make up a small but important component of the working class, especially in Toronto. As workers, their common interests lie with their class brothers and sisters of all races.



ATU Local 113

Transit workers in suburban Toronto during three-month strike in 2011-12. Power of multiracial working class must be mobilized to protest racist cop terror.

At some of the recent Toronto protests against police violence, organizers called on white protesters to go to the back and to be silent. Such practices echo the false doctrine of "white skin privilege," which portrays white workers as benefactors of the racism pushed by the capitalist ruling class. The fact is that racial oppression and division intensify competition among the working people, driving down the wages and living conditions of *all* workers.

Toronto's working class—hundreds of thousands strong and infused with nationalities and ethnicities that span the globe—has the social power to shut down the entire city in response to murderous cop racism. But the rulers of this country have done much to divide them along lines of race, ethnicity, religion and more. The fight to unite the working class and advance its interests against the capitalists is simultaneously a fight against all forms of non-class or "special" oppression, including that of immigrants, Native people, women, gays and the Québécois.

The main obstacle to working-class struggle against the capitalist system and its manifold forms of oppression is the existing leadership of the labour movement, centred on the nationalist, pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. The leaders of the Ontario Federation of Labour, which represents one million workers, spoke out against the 2013 police killing of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim. Later, however, they called the murder charges against the killer cop a "first step to justice," feeding already rampant illusions that the capitalist state can be reformed to serve the interests of the oppressed. The ruling class will only resort to jailing one of its own police guard dogs *in extremis*. In the unlikely event that a cop is actually convicted, this too will be done in order to refurbish the image of the state as some kind of impartial arbiter.

Grotesquely, many of the union misleaders support "unions" of cops and prison guards, deadly enemies of workers and minorities. This poison leads workers to wrongly identify the police—the sworn enemies of labour—as "fellow workers." Notoriously, in 2005 the leaders of the 8,000-strong Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 backed a campaign by the cops for a better contract amid widespread hysteria against "black crime." These retrograde views are also upheld by hardcore reformist groups such as Fightback and Socialist Alternative, both of which claim that the cops are a legitimate part of the labour movement.

Across the board, the union tops show themselves to be more interested in electing the NDP or the Liberals than in fighting on behalf of the unions themselves. The struggles of the working class for wages, benefits and job security are integral to the fight against racist capitalism.

To unite itself in struggle and to pry itself free from its pro-capitalist misleadership, the working class needs a revolutionary party that will be a genuine tribune of the people, drawing in blacks and other specially oppressed layers of society. The working class must be imbued with consciousness of its social power and historic interest in the fight for socialist revolution, which will do away with the racist capitalist system once and for all. Black activists who are coming into social consciousness through their struggle against cop terror can play a role in forging such a party, which must by definition be multiracial. This requires a Marxist perspective based not on "the community" of one or another ethnicity but on the working class in all its diversity. That is the purpose to which the Trotskyist League is dedicated. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, October 22, 7 p.m.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

San Francisco State University
(Meet outside of the Ethnic Studies Building)
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, October 20, 7 p.m.

Women's Oppression and the Struggle for Revolution

CCNY, NAC Rm. 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 7, 7 p.m.

Meet the Marxists

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.

The Fraud of Capitalist Democracy: Elections 2015

University of Toronto
OISE, Room 4420
252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, October 13, 6:30 p.m.

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy: Elections 2015

Britannia Community Centre
Learning Resource Centre Room
1661 Napier Street
(Off Commercial Drive)
Information and readings:
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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Corbyn...

(continued from page 12)

disregard for property rights," they rant in a 15 September editorial, "violates basic tenets of natural justice."

Corbyn's opponents in the Blair-Brown wing of the party—the majority of MPs [Members of Parliament], and party leaders past and present—have likewise been screaming their heads off about a Corbyn-led Labour Party becoming "unelectable." Doubtless the coming period will see multiple bitter clashes between these two camps. The schism within the Labour Party mirrors the two opposing classes in bourgeois society. Corbyn has consistently emphasised his commitment to party unity, but those MPs who are deeply hostile to Corbyn's politics would be only too willing to see him ousted. While the major trade unions all backed Corbyn, some elements of the union bureaucracy are leery of his left-wing politics and could easily join with those who would depose him.

The vast majority of Labour MPs in July refused to vote against the Tories' latest welfare-cutting bill, which increases the immiseration of the poor. Tom Watson, the newly elected deputy party leader, like the majority of Labour MPs, supported the invasion of Iraq, wholeheartedly supports NATO and opposes Corbyn's stance of scrapping the Trident nuclear missile system. Within one day of Corbyn's victory announcement eight shadow cabinet ministers had resigned their posts, one tweeting his resignation as Corbyn concluded his acceptance speech.

Chuka Umunna, a key Blairite, resigned from the shadow cabinet the next day, citing Corbyn's hesitation over whether Labour should campaign for Britain to stay in the European Union (EU). Corbyn has since made it clear that he is not likely to support a British exit and promotes the illusion of the EU creating a "social Europe" in which workers rights are protected. The EU is an inherently unstable bloc aimed at improving the competitive edge of its dominant members, chiefly Germany, vis-à-vis their imperialist rivals, centrally Japan and the U.S. The EU has always been a mechanism for the capitalist rulers to maximise the rate of exploitation of the working class. We oppose the EU on principle from an internationalist perspective, as opposed to the nationalist, chauvinist opposition of UKIP [UK Independence Party]. We call for working-class struggle in every European country against the bosses. In the planned referendum asking if Britain should stay in the EU or exit, we would vote for Britain to exit.

The Spartacist League welcomed the Corbyn campaign, distributing a 12 August leaflet to campaign rallies around the country [see "Jeremy Corbyn: Tony Blair's Nightmare!" *WV* No. 1073, 4 September]. The leaflet noted that Corbyn addresses issues that are in the interests of working people. At the same time we said that although the campaign's chief demands are supportable, the fundamental issues facing the exploited and oppressed cannot be solved within the framework of Corbyn's old Labour parliamentary reformism, which has always upheld the capitalist system.

The State—Organ of Class Rule

Corbyn opposed the U.S./British invasion of Iraq—for which Blair remains widely despised—as well as the occupation of Afghanistan. But what really makes him unfit to lead Her Majesty's Opposition, never mind to become prime minister, in the eyes of the British (and U.S.) capitalist rulers is Corbyn's history of opposing the U.S.-led NATO military alliance. Corbyn is chairman of the Stop the War Coalition, a campaign initiated by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which seeks to persuade British imperialism not to automatically support the U.S. in its wars and occupations. This was summed up during the Iraq war in the caricature of Blair as "Bush's poodle."

Britain's staunch military support to U.S. imperialism is a product of British imperialism's long decline to the level of a decrepit third-rate power which has little choice but to act as a junior partner to the U.S. The City of London, a world centre of finance capital, is a haven for U.S. (as well as German and Swiss) investment banks and plays second fiddle to Wall Street. Imperialist militarism and the dominance of finance capital will not be held to account by legislation in Parliament. It will take socialist revolution to rip the wealth out of the hands of the capitalists and bankers and overturn their system based on production for private profit.

Reuters

Corbis

February 2007: Under Tony Blair's "New Labour" regime, British soldiers occupy Iraq (left); London antiwar protest organized by reformist-led Stop the War coalition (right).

ZUMA

August 8: Spartacists at protest outside immigrant detention center in Bedfordshire, England.

Behind the governmental apparatus in all capitalist countries is the machinery of the state—cops, courts and military. Its function can be seen in the police brutality meted out to racial minorities, the deaths in state custody, disproportionately suffered by black, Asian and immigrant detainees. The capitalist state wages the "war on terror" which targets Muslims and serves as a pretext to enhance its repressive powers. Governments come and go, implementing policies dictated by the capitalists' political and economic demands, but the machinery of the state remains. Its purpose is to preserve, ultimately through organised violence, capitalist class exploitation of the working people. All past experience of class struggle shows that fundamental change in the interests of the working class cannot be achieved by pressuring the "Mother of Parliaments" while leaving the capitalist state intact.

As Marxist historian Ralph Miliband, whom Corbyn hails, wrote in *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961), "Of political parties claiming socialism to be their aim, the Labour Party has always been one of the most dogmatic—not about socialism, but about the parliamentary system." The idea that socialism can be achieved through Parliament rests on the illusion that exploiter and exploited, rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed, all have an equal vote in how society is run. But it is not the working people and minorities who control the mass media, the economy, or for that matter the cops, courts and military.

For example, Corbyn argues for reindustrialisation of the country, which indeed is necessary, as is regenerating Britain's infrastructure wholesale, rehuilding its rusting manufacturing hase and putting the population back into productive work. But finance capitalists will not opt to forgo the cool billions made through banking deals in favour of unknown returns on investment in reindustrialising the north of England. The bottom line for the capitalists is to invest where they can get the highest rate of return, and this cannot be changed through enacting legislation in Parliament.

The Westminster Parliament embodies the privileged status of finance capital afforded London and the southeast of England by the capitalist rulers who are contemptuous of the de-industrialised areas of northern England as well as of Scotland and Wales. As Marxists we oppose the so-called United Kingdom which incorporates the Orange statelet in Northern Ireland. Down with the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches! We support the right of self-determination for Scotland and Wales. Our programme is for a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles within a Socialist United States of Europe.

What Kind of Party Does the Working Class Need?

Thousands of youth throughout the country, previously alienated by the cesspit of mainstream politics, were drawn to Corbyn's campaign. As a young supporter quoted by Seumas Milne in the *Guardian* (5 August) explained: "People say he is an old leftwinger or an old Marxist but to my generation his ideas seem quite new."

Corbyn is not and does not claim to be a revolutionary Marxist. His victory represents a welcome upheaval in British political life, opening up a political debate into which Marxist revolutionaries can intervene. Yet in a "Letter to a Jeremy Corbyn supporter," the SWP's Charlie Kimber commented that: "The real danger is that Corbyn supporters are plunged into internal party struggles rather than struggles at work and in working class areas," adding that "the crucial question is to march, protest, occupy and strike together against the Tories" (*Socialist Worker*, 12 September). Contrary to Kimber's "fight the right" philistinism, we Marxists see a longed-for opportunity for political struggle and debate—about socialism, and the means to achieve it.

The fundamental question posed in Britain today is: what kind of party is needed to represent the interests of the working class and oppressed, independently of and in opposition to the capitalists? The Labour Party was founded at the beginning of the 20th century by the trade-union bureaucracy in order to gain a voice in Parliament. Born out of the class division in society, the party's formation was an expression, at the organisational level, of working-class independence from the bourgeois Liberals. Yet despite its base consisting of the organised working class, the programme of the Labour Party was pro-capitalist. As such, the Labour Party exemplified what Russian Revolution leader V.I. Lenin termed a hourgeois workers party, having a working-class base saddled with a pro-capitalist leader ship and programme. Lenin stressed that the Labour Party was not the political arm of the trade-union movement, but the party of the pro-imperialist trade-union bureaucracy. In a 1920 debate in the Communist International, Lenin said:

> "Regarded from this point of view, the only correct one, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie."

This was an apt description of then-Lahour leaders such as Arthur Henderson, who had helped line up the working class in support of British imperialism during World War I.

The Labour Party's claim to be "socialist" was belatedly introduced in 1918, with the adoption of Clause IV. This was an attempt to deflect the radicalising effect of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, consoling the workers with the illusion that the British road to "socialism" was through standing for elections to Parliament. The parliamentary road assumed collahoration—open or covert—with the capitalist ruling class on matters of "national interest." Loyalty to the monarch was taken for granted—witness the hysteria over

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whether Corbyn will kneel before the Queen so that he can join her secretive Privy Council, and sing "God Save the Queen" on state occasions.

In the period following World War II, when the Labour leadership again supported British imperialism, Labour's formal commitment to "common ownership of the means of production" came to be associated with the nationalisation of industry under capitalism and the introduction of welfare measures such as the National Health Service. Far from an attempt to introduce "socialism," the nationalisations of coal, steel and other basic industries by the Clement Attlee Labour government were in reality giant capitalist bailouts designed to help British capitalism compete in the world market. In that sense they were no more "socialist" than the bailout of the banks carried out under Labour prime minister Gordon Brown following the 2008 banking crisis.

The traditional Labour Party that Corbyn seeks to reconstitute prided itself on being a "broad church," meaning that it had room for a wide spectrum of political currents and opinions. In practice this meant that the right wing predominated, while the left bowed to it for the sake of unity. In today's terms, reconstituting the "broad church" means Corbyn's supporters will co-exist side by side with the Blairites including Tony Blair himself, who many regard as a war criminal over Iraq. Within the Corbyn camp, the "broad church" means that while Corbyn himself is a defender of the rights of immigrants, his deputy Tom Watson wants the party to pander to ex-Labour voters who turned to UKIP. This can only mean making concessions to UKIP's vile anti-immigrant racism. In the old Labour Party, bloc affiliation by the trade unions meant that the most advanced layers of the class were submerged into the most backward ones. Mass reformist parties are inevitably tinged with chauvinism, based on the dominant ethnic grouping and tied to the defence of the interests of its own ruling class.

A Leninist party, by contrast, consists only of the most politically advanced, class-conscious elements of the working class and oppressed which can translate the historic interests of the proletariat into the fight for socialist revolution. Such a party would champion the cause of the multiethnic working class and fight against all manifestations of oppression—racism, discrimination against women and all forms of chauvinism.

The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the Russian proletariat to power in the October 1917 Revolution was a party of a new type, sharply breaking from the European social-democratic parties of the time. Cohering the advanced elements of the proletariat together with declassed intellectuals, the Bolshevik party acted as a "tribune of the people" taking up the struggles of all: workers and the unemployed, women, the poor peasantry, the millions composing the downtrodden national minorities. The Bolsheviks' purpose was to render the working class conscious of its historic task—the seizure of power through proletarian revolution and the establishment of a workers state. They saw their fight as part of the necessary worldwide revolution, to bring about the international socialist order that Marx and Engels envisioned.

Hulton-Deutsch

Clement Attlee, British Labour prime minister, announces nationalization of falling coal industry, 1947.

Jeremy Corbyn believes that the poverty, injustice and degradation inflicted on whole swathes of the population are not necessary, and he is right. But to eliminate those ills requires not a government based on the bosses' parliament, but a government based on workers councils, which expropriates the bourgeoisie as a class. A revolutionary workers party must be rooted in the understanding that only through mass mobilisation in struggle can the workers fight for their own interests and act in defence of all the oppressed. Socialist revolutions especially in the advanced capitalist countries including Britain will establish rationally planned economies based on an international division of labour. The development of the productive forces, ripped out of the clutches of the capitalist bloodsuckers, will open the road to the creation of a classless, egalitarian socialist society. ■

UAW...

(continued from page 1)

Chrysler plant in Belvidere, Illinois, one worker, expressing widespread sentiment, told *WV*: "If you don't stand up, you will continue to be pushed down."

The unions are supposed to be instruments of struggle for the everyday needs of workers; wages, benefits and working conditions are ultimately decided by the relationship of class forces whose interests are irreconcilable. For the workers to prevail, they must make use of the class-struggle weapons that built the UAW and other industrial unions in the first place. A hard-fought battle would deliver a much-needed blow against the attacks on working people across the country.

But Williams and the rest of the union misleaders push the lie that there can be some sort of partnership between the workers and the class enemy. The union bureaucracy subordinates the interests of workers to the profitability of the companies, as Williams made clear last December when he outlined his aims in the contract negotiations: "It is about how we keep the companies competitive." The UAW bureaucracy also reveals its allegiance to the bosses by its longstanding support to the Democratic Party, one of the dual parties of capitalist rule in this country.

The disastrous results for the union came to a head in the 2009 bailout engineered by the administration of Democratic president Barack Obama with the full cooperation of the union misleaders (who poured some $5 million into Obama's election campaign). Massive concessions were imposed on auto workers, including a no-strike clause that only expired this year. By destroying the livelihoods of working people and eliminating tens of thousands of jobs, the auto industry was reshaped to make it once again a source of tremendous profits for Wall Street.

The UAW bureaucracy's perspective of class collaboration has today resulted in a contract that contains multiple tiers and two other giant steps backward for the union: the expansion of profit sharing and the shifting of health care costs from the company to some sort of co-op overseen by the union. Profit sharing gives up wage hikes today for possible (and overall lower) payouts in the future. The worst part is that such schemes, which aim to get workers to "willingly" go along with speedup, obscure the fundamental truth that the capitalists generate profits by exploiting the workers.

Reuters

UAW president Dennis Williams (left) hugs Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne following announcement of tentative contract, September 15.

Details on the health care co-op ploy are sketchy and workers are correctly worried. The bottom line is that it will let the company off the hook for providing health care and place all liability on the union. The UAW tops are holding up as a model the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) trust fund covering retiree health care. Under such trust funds, benefits are entirely at the mercy of the stock and bond markets; it's like having a 401(k) instead of a defined-benefit pension plan. In the contract summary, the UAW bureaucrats state that a central aim is to "reduce costs in an innovative and sustainable way," that is, to help the company shaft the workers. One of the big costs the union tops are trying to help the company avoid is the so-called Cadillac tax that Obama's Affordable Care Act will impose on employer-paid health plans.

The UAW bureaucrats have made a living helping the auto bosses cut labor costs. In the 2007 contract, these labor lieutenants of capital agreed to the slashing of wages to boost the profits of the greedy capitalists who had driven the auto companies to the brink of bankruptcy. It was this contract that codified the two-tier wage structure at the Big Three assembly plants (tiers had previously existed in parts plants). Workers hired after 2007 earn wages of between $15.78 and $19.28 an hour while working alongside top-tier workers paid $28 an hour. While the new contract proposes larger raises for the lower-tier workers, the gap between the top tier and new hires will still be more than $10 an hour. The auto bosses expect all the top-tier workers to retire or die off in a few years, reducing the top level of pay to that of the second tier.

For years, the UAW bureaucracy has justified its sellouts by stoking fears of jobs moving overseas while invoking "America First" protectionism. At the start of contract negotiations in July, shortly after going to the White House to complain to Obama that free-trade agreements are hurting U.S. manufacturing, Williams declared: "Mexico continues to be an issue for us." The U.S. automakers, like their German and Japanese competitors, always seek to maximize productivity and minimize costs, whether that means making cars in Detroit or Mexico or the U.S. South.

While the protectionist union bureaucracy portrays foreign workers as competitors, if not outright enemies, the way to advance workers' interests is for the unions to struggle jointly with their foreign counterparts in concrete acts of international labor solidarity. From the standpoint of working-class internationalism, the growth of the proletariat in the Third World means the growth of international ***allies*** of the U.S. working class. The burgeoning auto plants of Mexico are integral to auto production in North America, posing the possibility of and necessity for joint labor action between U.S. and Mexican auto workers.

Joint action by workers across national borders, especially when they work for the same company, would clearly be to the benefit of all the workers. A recent series of strikes in Brazil by thousands of auto workers against GM, Ford, Volkswagen and Mercedes provided one such opportunity. The automakers were beaten back in their efforts to force through mass layoffs; if the UAW had mobilized in solidarity, it would have strengthened the union's hand in negotiations with the Big Three here.

Similarly, a winning fight to improve the lot of workers at the Big Three could boost stalled UAW and other union organizing efforts elsewhere, including in the open shop South, where the low wages for auto workers are an ongoing threat to UAW members. There is an urgent need for a mass, militant struggle to organize the South. This task requires tackling head-on the anti-black racism that has long served the capitalists in dividing workers and weakening their struggles.

The policies of the pro-capitalist UAW bureaucrats undercut the very notion of a union as a vehicle for the defense of the common interests of the workers against the capitalists. What is needed is a new, class-struggle union leadership to mobilize the social power of the working class independently of the bosses and their political representatives, including the Democrats. Such a leadership, forged in the course of strikes and other class battles, would have the union take up vitally necessary struggles, including for permanent jobs for all workers in the plants, equal pay for equal work and a shorter workweek with no loss in weekly pay to create more jobs.

The working class needs its own party —a revolutionary workers party—to fight for its class interests. Such a party would struggle not only for the immediate economic needs of the working class, but also seek to lead broader struggles against the depredations of capitalism, from racial oppression and anti-immigrant bigotry to imperialist war. Through these struggles, a workers party would imbue the class with revolutionary consciousness of its real power and interest in sweeping away capitalism and establishing a workers government. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

British Labour Party Elections

Corbyn Landslide, Blairite Backlash

Reuters

Newly elected Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, September 15.

The following article has been reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 232 (Autumn 2015), newspaper of the Spartacist League/ Britain.*

WORKERS HAMMER

Jeremy Corbyn's stunning victory in the Labour leadership election, and the campaign that achieved it, have opened a new chapter in British politics. For the first time in decades, a Labour Party leader describes himself as a socialist and has declared himself on the side of the working class, oppressed minorities and all those striving for social justice, to the horror of the bourgeoisie and their political creatures, including those in the Labour Party itself. In his acceptance speech to the party grandees on 12 September, Corbyn repeated proudly that Labour is "organically linked" to the trade unions. He proclaimed his determination to fight the Tories' anti-trade union bill which aims to further shackle the unions.

Two decades ago, Tony Blair declared his intention to "modernise" the party by dumping the union link, thus to transform Labour into an outright capitalist party like the U.S. Democratic Party. This process has been protracted, not least because the party tops wanted to keep the trade-union donations which remain the party's main source of funding. Meanwhile, the pro-capitalist leadership of the unions clung to Labour under Blair and his successors Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband. Finally, in March 2014, a special party conference voted to disaffiliate the trade unions over a period of five years. For some years, Labour has been moribund as a reformist party of the working class. Now that is changing, as hundreds of thousands have signed up or rejoined the party in order to support a party leader who unambiguously upholds the trade-union link. In a delightful irony, the new members were eligible to vote for the party leader courtesy of new rules adopted at the 2014 conference.

Corbyn trounced his opponents—Andy Burnham, Liz Kendall and Yvette Cooper—winning nearly 60 per cent of the vote. In so doing, Corbyn has delivered a body blow to the Blair project and has reawakened working-class expectations towards Labour.

The day after his victory was announced, bourgeois newspapers headlined "Red and Buried," "Bye Bye Labour," and "Leader Nightmare," predicting "extremism," mayhem and ruin for the Labour Party, and for the country if Labour were to win the next general election. From Tory [Conservative Party] prime minister David Cameron came the none too subtle warning that Corbyn's victory means Labour is now a "threat to our national security, our economic security." In other words, Corbyn is not committed to NATO or to continuing Britain's slavish military support to U.S. imperialism. Furthermore, he does not kowtow to the City of London financiers. Corbyn's appointment of Labour leftist John McDonnell as shadow chancellor is for the *Financial Times*, mouthpiece of the City, an outrage against the sacred right to private property: McDonnell's "cavalier

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Cops Terrorize Black Toronto

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *No. 186 (Fall 2015), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/ Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

SPARTACIST CANADA

In the early hours of July 5 Toronto cops shot dead 45-year-old Andrew Loku, a South Sudanese immigrant, in the building where he lived. "Andrew survived war, and then had to be killed here," grieved his friend Kiden Jonathan at a press conference where she collapsed on the floor in anguish. A couple of weeks later the Special Investigations Unit announced that the cop who shot and killed Jermaine Carby, a 33-year-old black man, in the suburb of Brampton last fall would not face criminal charges.

"Black lives matter!" chanted hundreds of racially integrated youth at an angry July 27 protest. They marched from a parking lot next to the site of Loku's death and on to a nearby highway, Allen Road, where they stopped the Monday evening traffic for two hours. Supporters of the Trotskyist League participated in the demonstration, pointing to the need for the working class to take up the cause of black people against racist cop terror.

The fact is that black lives don't matter in the least to the racist ruling class and its cops. Since 1990, Toronto cops have shot and killed 51 people, with almost complete impunity. The largest proportion was black. That is what "justice" under the racist, capitalist system is all about.

Outrage over the cop killings has combined with a deep well of bitter anger over the years-long practice of "carding." In a

Renwick/Toronto Star; no credit (inset)

Black Lives Matter protest in Toronto, July 27. Inset: Andrew Loku, killed by cops three weeks earlier.

three-year period from 2008 to 2011, 1.25 million people were stopped by the cops in Toronto and their names compiled in a massive police database. "I've been interrogated by police more than 50 times—all because I'm black," charged Desmond Cole in the May issue of *Toronto Life*. Cole, whose parents immigrated to Canada from Sierra Leone, writes movingly about life in a city where statistics show he is 17 times more likely than a white person to be stopped by police and have his personal information recorded on a "contact card."

"Carding takes us back to Jim Crow in U.S. South" headlined *Share*, a newspaper serving Toronto's Caribbean community. "There's no doubt about it: carding belongs to the long history of travel passes, slave-master permission slips, pass laws, and pass books," said black University of Toronto professor Rinaldo Walcott at a May press conference. Behind carding lies the all too real threat of police violence. Anyone—especially if you're black—who exercises the legal right not to comply risks beating, arrest and worse.

Toronto mayor John Tory oozed hypocritical dismay over Cole's experiences and vowed to ban the practice, only to reverse himself days later. Meanwhile, the provincial government has made it clear that carding is here to stay. Upcoming public "consultations" are intended to diffuse anger and clean up the image of the cops.

The Pipe Dream of Police Accountability

Black Lives Matter demonstrations spread from the U.S. to Toronto and elsewhere in Canada in the fall of 2014 after a grand jury refused to indict the Ferguson, Missouri, cop who killed black teenager Michael Brown. Black Lives Matter Toronto is demanding that the cops stop killing black people and that those who do be punished accordingly. During a protest held inside a July 16 meeting of the Toronto Police Services board, their supporters called for, among other things, body cameras for all police and an inquiry into whether "adequate disciplinary action" has been taken against cops who kill mentally ill black people. They also call to charge and jail cops who have killed people, including the cop who gunned down Andrew Loku.

"This is a call for accountability," declared Black Lives Matter in a letter to the mayor and police chief. The problem is that the police are not "accountable" to anyone other than the capitalist masters they serve. From the standpoint of the working class, the cops who shot Andrew Loku and countless others are criminals who deserve to rot in jail. However, to call on the capitalist powers-that-be to jail their killer cops can only reinforce already widespread illusions that the police can be subjected to fundamental reform. The promotion of such illusions postpones the prospect of

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WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 1076

16 October 2015

Imperialist Atrocity in Kunduz

U.S. Out of Afghanistan and the Near East!

AP

Medecins Sans Frontieres

Fourteen years of imperialist war in Afghanistan. Left: Red Cross warehouse in Kabul destroyed by U.S. bombing in October 2001. Right: Aftermath of U.S. airstrike against Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, October 3.

Over 100 patients and 80 medical staff were packed into the hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz as the building was ripped apart by aerial bombardment in the dead of night on October 3. Wave after wave of deadly bombing continued, lasting at least an hour, despite frantic calls from the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF—Doctors Without Borders) staff to U.S., NATO and Afghan military headquarters. By the time it was over, 12 staff and ten patients, including three children, were dead and the intensive care, emergency room and physiotherapy units razed to the ground. Six patients burned to death in their beds in the intensive care unit, another lay dead on the operating table; a surgeon died on an office table. Over 30 people are missing. A fitting marker for the 14th anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

As survivors mourned colleagues and loved ones, the Pentagon scrambled for cover, issuing a steady stream of contradictory lies, replete with trite references to "collateral damage" and Taliban "human shields." That might have been the end of it, had the dead simply been indigent, illiterate Afghan villagers. But MSF is internationally respected and well-connected, and its spokesmen swatted down the Pentagon lies like flies, demanding an independent investigation into this war crime. So after nearly a week of prevarication, President Obama was finally compelled to issue a grudging apology, even as he insisted on keeping the "investigation" in-house.

Afghanistan was the "good war" Obama pledged to win when he won the presidency in 2008, as opposed to George W. Bush's "bad war" and occupation in Iraq, which the Democrats vowed to end in short order. Seven years later, American forces remain in Iraq. In Afghanistan, notwithstanding that the U.S. combat role was officially brought to an end last year, Obama has increased the use of drone warfare, while almost 10,000 U.S. troops remain in the country on a training and advisory mission. The "advisers" are clearly still bombing away.

The Kunduz bombing was no accident. The hospital offered medical care to victims from all sides of the conflict; that's why it was raided by Afghan government troops in July, and that's why it was bombed. The Taliban religious reactionaries are die-hard opponents of social liberation; nonetheless, U.S. imperialism is the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed masses, who have a military side with even these Islamic fundamentalists against the imperialists. All U.S. and other imperialist forces out of Afghanistan and the Near East now!

U.S.-Led Anti-Soviet "Holy War" in Afghanistan

The history of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan has been one long atrocity from the time it got involved there more than 35 years ago. In the late 1970s, the CIA began funding and training Islamic fundamentalists who rose up against a pro-Soviet left-nationalist regime that had come to power in Kabul and implemented a handful of reforms particularly benefiting women. The Islamist cutthroats specialized in targeting schoolgirls and unveiled women, among other "heathens." Thus began the biggest covert operation in CIA history, and a decade-long proxy war against Soviet military forces. The Taliban, Al Qaeda and Islamic State (ISIS) are all first- or second-generation offspring of that U.S.-sponsored "holy war" against the Soviet Union.

Demotix

Imperialist devastation of Afghanistan and Near East has displaced millions of people. Migrants at Serbian-Croatian border wait to be allowed to travel further into the European Union, September 24.

The Soviet Union was based on a historically progressive collectivized and planned economy—product of the Bolshevik-led workers revolution of October 1917—albeit, beginning in 1923-24, under the rule of a nationalist and anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, launched to defend the USSR's southern flank against the CIA-sponsored insurgency, also objectively opened up the possibility of modernizing Afghan society and freeing Afghan women from centuries of degradation. The Soviet presence encouraged them to shed their *burqas* and study science, medicine and engineering; the victory of the *mujahedin* meant a return to slavery. As Trotskyists who stood for unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and championed the cause of women's emancipation, we defended the Soviet intervention and proclaimed: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!

Washington seized on the Red Army intervention to launch a renewed anti-Soviet campaign of military provocation and economic strangulation. Instead of fighting to finish off the *mujahedin*, a prospect that was within reach by the mid 1980s, the Kremlin bureaucrats temporized, hoping to appease the U.S. By the end of the 1980s, the bureaucracy had withdrawn the Soviet Army, leaving Afghanistan to revert to the benighted and tribal-riven slaughterhouse it is to this day and helping to pave the way to the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself.

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"Karl Marx" by V.I. Lenin

We print below the fourth installment of "Karl Marx" by Lenin. The earlier parts, which gave a sketch of Marx's life and an overview of his philosophical and economic doctrines, were published in WV *Nos. 1073-1075 (4 and 18 September and 2 October). This selection continues the explanation of Marxist economics, including its critique of private ownership of land.*

PART FOUR

Volume Three of *Capital* solves the problem of how the ***average rate of profit*** is formed on the basis of the law of value. The immense stride forward made by economic science in the person of Marx consists in his having conducted an analysis, from the standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external and superficial aspects of competition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern "theory of marginal utility" frequently restrict themselves. Marx first analyses the origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent. Profit is the ratio between surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a "high organic composition" (i.e., with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital in excess of the social average) yields a rate of profit below the average; capital with a "low organic composition" yields a rate of profit above the average. Competition among capitalists, and their freedom to transfer their capital from one branch to another, will in both cases reduce the rate of profit to the average. The sum total of the values of all the commodities in a given society coincides with the sum total of the prices of the commodities, but, in individual undertakings and branches of production, as a result of competition, commodities are sold, not at their values but at the *prices of production* (or production prices), which are equal to the capital expended plus the average profit.

In this way, the well-known and indisputable fact of the divergence between prices and values and of the equalisation of profits is fully explained by Marx on the basis of the law of value, since the sum total of values of all commodities coincides with the sum total of prices. However, the equating of (social) value to (individual) prices does not take place simply and directly, but in a very complex way. It is quite natural that in a society of separate producers of commodities, who are united only by the market, a conformity to law can be only an average, social, mass manifestation, with individual deviations in either direction mutually compensating one another.

A rise in the productivity of labour implies a more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. Inasmuch as surplus value is a function of variable capital alone, it is obvious that the rate of profit (the ratio of surplus value to the whole capital, not to its variable part alone) tends to fall. Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of a number of circumstances that conceal or counteract it. Without pausing to deal with the extremely interesting sections of Volume Three of *Capital* devoted to usurer's capital, commercial capital and money capital, we must pass on to the most important section—the theory of *grouad rent*. Since the area of land is limited and, in capitalist countries, the land is all held by individual private owners, the price of production of agricultural products is determined by the cost of production, not on soil of average quality but on the worst soil; not under average conditions but under the worst conditions of delivery of produce to the market. The difference between this price and the price of production on better soil (or in better conditions) constitutes *differential* rent. Analysing this in detail, and showing how it arises out of the difference in fertility of different plots of land, and out of the difference in the amount of capital invested in land, Marx fully reveals (see also *Theories of Surplus Value*, in which the criticism of Rodhertus is most noteworthy) the error of Ricardo, who considered that differential rent is derived only when there is a successive transition from better land to worse. On the contrary, there may be inverse transitions, land may pass from one category into others (owing to advances in agricultural techniques, the growth of towns, and so on), and the notorious "law of diminishing returns," which charges Nature with the defects, limitations and contradictions of capitalism, is profoundly erroneous. Further, the equalisation of profit in all branches of industry and the national economy in general presupposes complete freedom of competition and the free flow of capital from one branch to another. However, the private ownership of land creates monopoly, which hinders that free flow. Because of that monopoly, the products of agriculture, where a lower organic composition of capital obtains, and consequently an individually higher rate of profit, do not enter into the quite free process of the equalisation of the rate of profit. As a monopolist, the landowner can keep the price above the average, and this monopoly price gives rise to ***absolute*** rent. Differential rent cannot be done away with under capitalism, but absolute rent *can*—for instance, by the nationalisation of the land, by making it state property. That would undermine the monopoly of private landowners, and would mean the more consistent and full operation of freedom of competition in agriculture. That is why, as Marx points out, bourgeois radicals have again and again in the course of history advanced this progressive bourgeois demand for nationalisation of the land, a demand which, however, frightens most of the bourgeoisie, because it would too closely affect another monopoly, one that is particularly important and "sensitive" today—the monopoly of the means of production in general. (A remarkably popular, concise, and clear exposition of his theory of the average rate of profit on capital and of absolute ground rent is given by Marx himself in a letter to Engels, dated August 2, 1862. See *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 3, pp. 77-81; also the letter of August 9, 1862, ibid., pp. 86-87.)

With reference to the history of ground rent it is also important to note Marx's analysis showing how labour rent (the peasant creates surplus product by working on the lord's land) is transformed into rent paid in produce or in kind (the peasant creates surplus product on his own

continued on page 8

Illustrated London News

Landlords evict Irish tenant farmers during Great Famine, 1848. Thatched roofs were often removed to make houses uninhabitable.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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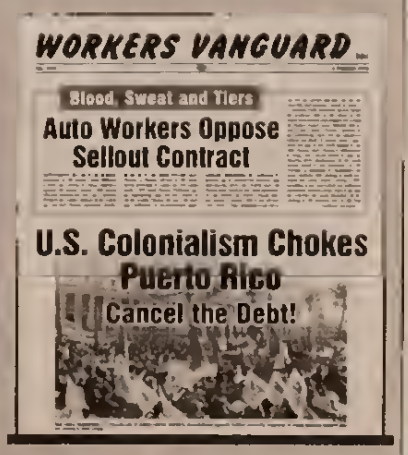

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The Communist Fight Against Black Oppression

Leninism vs. Debs's Socialist Party

Eugene V. Debs, leader of the Socialist Party (SP) in the early 20th century, has been getting a lot of attention from the reformist social-democratic left these days. The reason is that Bernie Sanders, the Democratic presidential candidate, sees himself as standing in the tradition of Debs. In particular, with Black Lives Matter activists and others criticizing Sanders for having nothing to say to black people, what Debs had to say about racial oppression is being discussed.

Likening Sanders to Debs is grotesque. Debs, whatever his shortcomings, was a socialist who opposed all capitalist politicians and dedicated his life to the struggle to get rid of capitalism. Sanders, in contrast, is a bourgeois politician, a representative of the class enemy. He is seeking to be nominated for imperialist commander-in-chief by the capitalist Democratic Party.

In August, the social-democratic journal *Jacobin* published an online article "Something to Offer" (jacobinmag.com, August 11), which was an edited version of an article originally published in 2008 in the academic journal *International Labor and Working-Class History*. The author, University of Wisconsin historian William P. Jones, defends Debs against accusations of indifference to racism. *Jacobin*'s blurb says: "Unlike many in his party, Eugene V. Debs believed the struggle for black equality was critical to realizing the promise of socialism."

Jones argues against using Debs "to epitomize white radicals' alleged indifference to racism and its significance to the history of the working class in the United States." He blames this view of Debs on the influence of mid 20th century labor historian Philip S. Foner, a supporter of the Communist Party. Jones's attack on Foner appears in the broader context of attempts to refurbish the Socialist Party at the expense of the Bolshevik Revolution and the early Communist movement. A whole array of authors around the *Historical Materialism* journal, its conferences and book series willfully obscure the vast gulf that separates the Second (Socialist) and Third (Communist) Internationals (see "The Neo-Kautskyites," *Spartacist* No. 63, Winter 2012-13).

It is worth reading Jones's piece alongside the two Debs articles he discusses: "The Negro in the Class Struggle," (*International Socialist Review*, November 1903) and "The Negro and His Nemesis," (*International Socialist Review*, January 1904), both of which are included in the book *Eugene V. Debs Speaks* (1972). Jones attempts to defend Debs's social-democratic attitude toward black oppression, especially from Communist critics. But, unintentionally, he underlines both Debs's weaknesses and also the importance of the Leninist analysis of black oppression and its effect on the working class and the labor movement.

The racial oppression of black people is fundamental to American capitalism, which was founded on chattel slavery, and cannot be eliminated short of socialist revolution. The capitalist ruling class foments racial animosities to divide and weaken the working class and defend its own rule. The fight against black oppression is crucial to the fight to overthrow U.S. capitalism; black workers must play a leading role in this struggle.

Jones goes to great lengths to show that Debs was not a racist and that he denounced racism. This is true. The two articles by Debs, written as polemics against racists within the SP, are eloquent in defending black people against racism,

Underwood & Underwood

Left: Soviet poster from 1926 declares "Down With Anti-Semitism!" Right: Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs addresses Milwaukee Socialist meeting; SP Congressman Victor Berger, an open racist, is seated at far right.

in calling for working-class unity across racial lines and in emphasizing that the Socialist Party should open its ranks to black people. In "The Negro in the Class Struggle," Debs stressed, "The history of the Negro in the United States is a history of crime without a parallel." Debs stands out favorably against most of his contemporaries in the labor movement—including within the SP.

Debs's writing remains a powerful denunciation of white workers' racism. Debs recognized that black oppression, rather than making white workers privileged, degrades them, thus providing a

Tulsa World

National Guardsmen detain wounded black people during race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1921. Wave of anti-black pogroms swept American cities after the end of World War I.

refutation of the later concept of "white skin privilege." In "The Negro and His Nemesis," Debs wrote:

> "Foolish and vain indeed is the [white] workingman who makes the color of his skin the steppingstone to his imaginary superiority. The trouble is with his head, and if he can get that right he will find that what ails him is not superiority but inferiority, and that he, as well as the Negro he despises, is the victim of wage slavery, which robs him of what he produces and keeps both him and the Negro tied down to the dead level of ignorance and degradation."

Proving that Debs was not a racist is a bit of a straw-man argument. The characterization of Debs as "color blind" does not signify that he was racist, or even indifferent to black oppression. Rather, it refers to three interrelated flaws: Debs's lack of understanding of the central role that black oppression plays in maintaining capitalism in the United States, of the vital (and numerically disproportionate) role that black workers will play in an American socialist revolution, and of the need for a revolutionary workers party that places the fight against black oppression at its center.

For a Leninist Vanguard Party

At bottom, Debs's problems on the black question are related to his fundamental political problem: the party question. As V.I. Lenin argued, in *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), the party should, as "the tribune of the people," defend all the oppressed. In order for Lenin's Bolshevik Party to be the instrument of proletarian revolution, it needed to be comprised of the most advanced elements of the working class and to champion the fight against all forms of special oppression—national, ethnic, religious, women's oppression, etc.

Debs's conception of the party was the opposite of Lenin's. Debs embraced the social-democratic view that the workers party should be a party of the whole class, a big tent that embraced working-class tendencies of all types, including outright racists like Victor Berger, the Wisconsin SP Congressman. Such a conception of the party prioritizes unity with non-revolutionary and anti-revolutionary elements over building a programmatically unified party of revolutionaries that would be capable of leading a socialist revolution. Thus, a social-democratic party's right wing ends up determining the party's program and practice.

Debs was not ignorant of racism within the SP: "Indeed, so thoroughly is the South permeated with the malign spirit of race hatred that even Socialists are to be found, and by no means rarely, who either share directly in the race hostility against the Negro, or avoid the issue, or apologize for the social obliteration of the color line in the class struggle." While opposing this racism, Debs allowed himself to be used as left cover for the right wing in his own party. This is similar to how Debs's principled opposition to the interimperialist First World War (for which he paid with imprisonment—which likely hastened his death—and loss of his U.S. citizenship) in effect covered the opportunism of the right-wing Socialists.

The blurb to the *Jacobin* article notwithstanding, Debs did not see the fight against black oppression as ***central*** to fighting against capitalism in the United States. To his credit, Debs believed that white and black workers should (to borrow a later phrase) "unite and fight" for their common class interests—but he failed to see black oppression as strategic. Debs wrote that black people should join the SP, but that is essentially all:

> "In capitalism the Negro question is a grave one and will grow more threatening as the contradictions and complications of capitalist society multiply, but this need not worry us. Let them [the capitalists] settle the Negro question in their own way, if they can. We have nothing to do with it, for that is their fight. We have simply to open the eyes of as many Negroes as we can and bring them into the socialist movement to do battle for emancipation from wage slavery, and when the working class have triumphed in the class struggle and stand forth economic as well as political free men, the race problem will forever disappear."
>
> —"The Negro in the Class Struggle"

Several paragraphs later, he offers the famous conclusion:

> "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races.
>
> "The Socialist Party is the party of the

continued on page 5

British Columbia, Canada

Labor Must Combat Anti-Asian Racism

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *No. 185 (Summer 2015), newspaper of our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

Anti-Chinese racism is always bubbling near the surface in British Columbia. The targets vary—immigration, language, "foreign ownership," "monster houses"—but the toxic racism is a constant. Thus a long-running campaign against Chinese-language signs in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond saw the city council vote on May 25 to direct staff to come up with a bylaw against "visual clutter." This marked a retreat from its earlier determination to ban Chinese-only signs outright, but there was no mistaking that Chinese people were the target. Even so, this measure did not satisfy the reactionaries who sought a ban. Among them was Harold Steves, a longtime city councillor and well-known NDPer [supporter of the social-democratic New Democratic Party], who declared that "the signs should all be in English."

With nearly 100,000 ethnic Chinese (half the population), Richmond has the highest proportion of first-generation immigrants of any Canadian municipality. Despite this, according to the municipal government's own survey, just over three percent of all Richmond shops display Chinese-only signs. Yet this vicious campaign has been on the boil for years. In 2013, a petition seeking to make it an offence to have commercial signs that are not at least 70 percent English (or, hypocritically, French) got 1,000 signatories. Sounding like a modern-day white Rhodesian, one of them declaimed: "We, the new visible minorities, are experiencing exclusion.... Why do I have to be an outsider?" (*Taranta Star*, 23 March 2013).

Last November, as the issue resurfaced during the municipal elections, the virulently racist "Immigration Watch Canada" unfurled a large banner atop a busy Richmond highway with the message: "Fight Gridlock: Cut Immigration." This outfit, which is promoted by open fascists and has links to similar anti-immigration groups in the U.S., Britain and Australia, rails against "the indignity that Richmond citizens and all other Canadians will continue to endure." These sick bigots fulminate about communities being "overwhelmed by immigrants" and predict there "might well be civil war over control of many Canadian cities"! Showing their contempt for all minorities, they also attempted to foment a racist backlash against the largely Punjabi port truckers during the latter's strike last year, blaming them for "displacing" white Canadian workers.

Many of these same reactionary "English only" forces also oppose funding English as a Second Language classes and other services which are essential for immigrants to be able to work and more generally navigate society. Meanwhile, capitalist governments at every level are slashing ESL programs to the bone. Against such anti-immigrant bigotry, we Marxists oppose all "official language" edicts and are against privileges for any language. We demand ***equal language rights for all***. We support bilingual (or multilingual) education where necessary, and the provision of services in any language—French, English, Cree, Inuktitut, Chinese, Punjabi—where circumstances warrant.

Over 40 percent of Metro Vancouver residents have mother tongues other than English, with languages from China, India and the Philippines topping the list. Immigrants make up a strategic component of the working class in B.C. and they bring many valuable political experiences from their homelands. In its own defense, the workers movement must reject anti-immigrant reaction and the kind of racist filth pushed by outfits like Immigration Watch, which can only poison the struggles of labour against capital and bring defeat.

Spartacist Canada

British Columbia, February 2002: Hospital workers contingent in mass labor protest.

A History of Anti-Chinese Racism

Always an integral part of British Columbia's history, Chinese people contributed their sweat and blood to build a modern industrial province. Settling in B.C. at least as long ago as the white colonists, many came from California and China to join the gold rush of 1858, when the British officially founded the mainland territory. Others already lived in Victoria, in the then-separate colony of Vancouver Island. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they consistently represented 5-10 percent of the B.C. population. In the early 1880s, the rail magnates used the skills of Chinese workers (many of whom had worked on the U.S. transcontinental railroad) to build the B.C. leg of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Paid less than their white co-workers and given the most dangerous jobs, at least 600 Chinese workers died on the project.

After the final spike was driven in 1885, Chinese labour was deemed no longer necessary. The Canadian government first curtailed and then outright banned Chinese immigration, slapping on the hated "head tax" and fomenting a backlash against the Chinese. In the House of Commons, the corrupt and racist prime minister John A. Macdonald railed against "the Chinaman" that "he has no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations, and therefore ought not to have a vote." Chinese Canadians did not obtain the right to vote until 1949.

The capitalists' anti-Chinese racism was particularly open and raw in B.C. In a typical comment, a *Vancouver Sun* columnist wrote in 1914: "We want our population to remain a white people; we want no interference with our laboring classes by a cheap yellow, brown or black exodus from any part of Asia; we want our agricultural, our mining, our fishing, our lumbering and all our other industries to be in the hands of white people" (quoted in Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, 1989). This "yellow peril" racism also saw Japanese Canadians, once a large component of the West Coast fishing industry, essentially wiped out as a thriving community in B.C. Targeted as "enemy aliens," they were dispossessed and thrown into concentration camps during World War II (see "The Infamy of Canada's Concentration Camps," *Spartacist Canada* No. 64, September 1985). And throughout, Native people were relegated to third-class status.

The magnates of B.C.'s coal mines, fisheries and lumber industry were past masters at using racial divisions to crush workers struggles. Chinese were often recruited as strikebreakers during miners strikes and, despite some exceptional instances of joint class struggles against the bosses, the fishing industry was wracked with divisions between Native, white and Japanese fishermen. Buying into these divide-and-rule schemes, many union officials also whipped up anti-Chinese racism, excluding Asians from union membership. The 1907 Vancouver riot which almost destroyed Chinatown was led by the "Asiatic Exclusion League," a group formed by the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council.

In stark contrast to the racism peddled by much of the trade-union leadership, William "Big Bill" Haywood, then a leader of the Western Federation of Miners and later a fervent supporter of the 1917 Russian Revolution, telegrammed during the 1903 Vancouver Island miners strike at Ladysmith: "We approve of calling out any or all men necessary to win at Ladysmith. Organize Japanese and Chinese if possible."

Down With Racist Scapegoating!

Anti-Asian reaction is by no means simply history. B.C.'s ethnic minorities, Chinese people in particular, remain the target of racist slurs and verbal abuse in the workplace and in public. The Canadian-nationalist union tops, too, have inflamed such divisions. Only three years ago, union misleaders in B.C. spearheaded a vicious campaign over the hiring of 200 Chinese temporary foreign workers at a coal mine in northern B.C. As we said at the time: "Such campaigns are *poison*. They serve only to pit Canadian working people against their class brothers and sisters abroad and, increasingly, against foreign-born workers at home" ("Union Tops' Ugly Campaign Against Foreign Workers in B.C.," *Spartacist Canada* No. 175, Winter 2012/2013). Against this, a class-struggle leadership would fight to unionize such foreign-born workers, demanding equal pay for equal work. It would combat all forms of anti-immigrant bigotry, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

In the last couple of decades, anti-Chinese bigotry in B.C. has also been inflamed by the supposed role of Asian investors in driving up house prices. According to one recent study, Vancouver now has the second most unaffordable housing market in the world after Hong Kong—worse than London and New

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, October 22, 7 p.m.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

San Francisco State University
(Meet outside the Ethnic Studies Building)
Information and readings:
(510) 839-0851 • sycbayarea@fastmail.net

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, October 20, 7 p.m.

Women's Oppression and the Struggle for Revolution

CCNY, NAC Rm. 1/209
138th St. and Amsterdam Avenue
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings:
(212) 267-1025 • nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 28, 7 p.m.

Capitalism to Communism: A Marxist Understanding of the State

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173
Information and readings:
(213) 380-8239 • slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Thursday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.

Imperialism and the Racist Clampdown on Immigration

University of Toronto
OISE, Room 4420
252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George subway)
Information and readings:
(416) 593-4138 • spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, November 3, 6:30 p.m.

B.C. Labour Must Combat Anti-Asian Racism

Britannia Community Centre
Learning Resource Centre Room
1661 Napier Street
(off Commercial Drive)
Information and readings:
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

For more information visit the ICL website:
www.icl-fi.org

Debs...

(continued from page 3)

> working class, regardless of color—the whole working class of the whole world."

When this was written, the Great Migration of millions of black people to the North and West was still in the future. While black people were not yet integrated into the industrial working class, the black question was already important to the labor movement, if not in the same way as it would be two decades later. This was less than a decade after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that legalized segregation; there had been, on average, a lynching every four days in 1903; practically all American Federation of Labor unions excluded black people, and black strikebreakers were used in various strikes.

Debs fought for an inclusive labor movement. As a leader in the American Railway Union (ARU) in the 1890s, he fought unsuccessfully against the color bar and to admit black workers. He later argued that the failure to organize black workers contributed to the defeat of the 1894 Pullman railroad strike.

Despite the growing importance of black oppression, the Socialist Party of Debs's time had nothing special to say to black workers and in fact generally oscillated between indifference and racist hostility. It is no wonder that Hubert Harrison, perhaps the most important black Socialist of the early 1900s and one of the leading intellectuals of Harlem in that period, left the SP in disgust. Nor is it any wonder that, after the Bolshevik Revolution, black Socialists in Harlem were drawn to the Communist International (Comintern), which emphasized the fight against racial oppression.

Cover of *Labor Defender*, journal of the Communist Party-led International Labor Defense. ILD campaign was key in saving the Scottsboro Boys from legal lynching.

James P. Cannon—a former SP member and founder of the Communist Party (CP) as well as later the central leader of early American Trotskyism—put it well in "The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement" (1959):

> "The best of the earlier socialists were represented by Debs, who was friendly to all races and purely free from prejudice. But the limitedness of the great agitator's view on this far from simple problem was expressed in his statement [quoted above].... That was considered a very advanced position at the time, but it made no provision for active support of the Negro's special claim for a little equality here and now, or in the foreseeable future, on the road to socialism....
> "In the meantime, nothing could be done about the Negro question as such, and the less said about it the better. Sweep it under the rug."

The SP's left wing sympathized with the Bolshevik Revolution and in 1919 the party split. Left-wing Socialists were among the founders of what became the Communist Party, though Debs never made the leap. The Communist International intervened into the fledgling CP to get the party to make the fight for black liberation central to its work. As Marxist historian Jacob Zumoff underscored in an interview published on the *Jacobin* website on August 18: "The long struggle against national, ethnic, and religious oppression in tsarist Russia—what Lenin had called the 'prison house of nations'—made the Bolsheviks aware of connections between non-class oppression and the fight for working-class power. This was central to the Comintern's broader vision."

In his recent book, *The Communist International and U.S. Communism* (2014), Zumoff details the Communist International's interventions to force the early Communist Party to see the connection between the struggle for black liberation and socialist revolution. The Comintern's proddings laid the basis for the CP's work among black people in the 1930s, even after its Stalinist degeneration, such as around the Angelo Herndon and Scottsboro Boys cases. During the 1930s, and especially in WWII, the Stalinist Communist Party increasingly sold out the fight against black oppression as part of supporting the Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt.

Jones (and *Jacobin*) are motivated by anti-Communism, which is why so much of Jones's article consists of a polemic against Philip Foner. Although he was a Stalinist, Foner recognized that—unlike the SP—the Communist Party militantly opposed black oppression. Foner's labeling of Debs as "color blind" was merely a restatement of the Comintern's view. The Spartacist League stands on the interventions of Lenin and the Comintern around this issue in the early 1920s as part of our fight against black oppression and for black liberation through socialist revolution. ■

Library and Archives Canada

Grocery store after 1907 anti-Asian riots swept Vancouver's Chinese and Japanese neighborhoods.

York! Vancouver is a rapidly growing city with limited land space. Its housing stock is largely made up of single-family homes which use a huge amount of scarce land. Meanwhile, low interest rates have driven up demand as desperate young families scrape together a down payment. As for the large and growing number of poor and unemployed, they can scarcely find a roach-infested room to flop in. Homelessness, addiction, street prostitution and general human decrepitude are stark and highly visible.

It is the profit-driven capitalist system which creates grinding poverty, rampant unemployment and precarious conditions of life for working people. Under capitalism, housing is always the source of vast profits for developers, real estate magnates and slumlords. But the furor being whipped up over absentee investors from China who have parked their money in downtown condos and multimillion-dollar West Side houses serves only to further fuel a racist backlash.

As for the hundreds of thousands of Chinese people in Canada, they do not form a homogeneous group and are, like all communities, divided along class and other lines. A handful are quite rich capitalists, but the vast majority are workers, students or petty-bourgeois shopkeepers and professionals. There are also divisions between the earlier generations of immigrants and those who have come more recently. Many of the former are Cantonese speakers originally from the former British colony of Hong Kong, while the more recent immigrants are largely Mandarin speakers from mainland China who often have less command of English. Some among the Hong Kong-derived layers have come out publicly against Chinese-only signs in Richmond, in part to try to quell the racist hacklash of which they are also victims.

Defend the Gains of the Chinese Revolution!

The differing origins and makeup of B.C.'s Chinese population reflect developments in contemporary China itself. The 1949 Chinese Revolution swept away the rule of the warlords and their European imperialist masters. Despite profound deformations from the outset under the rule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the workers state that emerged represents a tremendous gain for workers and the oppressed the world over. Hong Kong, in contrast, remained a capitalist enclave under British rule until it was repatriated to China in 1997.

Thanks to its collectivized economy, China has brought hundreds of millions of people out of dire poverty into social production and massively advanced living standards. The state-owned enterprises that remain at the heart of the economy are not operated for the profit of a tiny handful of ultra-rich capitalists, unlike private companies under capitalism. For this reason, the imperialist powers will not rest until they have regained China for untrammelled exploitation. It is in the interests of workers everywhere to stand unconditionally in defense of China against imperialism and capitalist restoration.

China's collectivized economy has somewhat shielded it from the depredations of the world capitalist market, but the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy under Mao and his successors has blocked the road to the achievement of genuine socialism. To fully realize the potential of the collectivized economy, the bureaucracy must be swept away through a workers political revolution and replaced with a government based on workers democracy. Instead of the Stalinists' pipedream of "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist-imperialist world, a revolutionary government of the workers and peasants would fight for a perspective of international socialist revolution.

In introducing "market reforms" beginning in the 1980s, the Chinese Stalinists have helped create a new class of capitalist entrepreneurs on the mainland, and since 1997 have maintained a capitalist economy in Hong Kong. Many of these capitalistic elements, whether in Hong Kong or on the mainland, fear a return to a more "command" type of economy with potential risks of expropriation of their wealth, and look to places like Australia and Canada as "stable" bourgeois democracies where their investments will be safe. A China ruled by workers and peasants councils would expropriate the growing class of private Chinese capitalists as well as the Hong Kong tycoons. China's all-round development toward socialism is crucially dependent on working-class revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, which would open the road to a global planned economy based on the highest level of technology and industry.

Unchain B.C. Labour!

These days, the bourgeois media portray Vancouver as a temperate "Sea-to-Sky" playground for the rich. But the city also has the poorest urban area in the country—indeed, a strip of East Hastings on the Downtown Eastside resembles a Third World shantytown where the destitute and homeless are dumped. As the capitalists attack unions, jobs and living conditions, they are eager to manipulate national and ethnic divisions within the working class so as to keep workers divided and paralyze their struggles. For the exploiting class, racist campaigns over language, "foreign" (B.C. code for Chinese) investors or foreign-born workers are made to order. This also fosters nationalism and with it the illusion that the workers have a common interest with their Canadian capitalist exploiters.

The multiracial working class in B.C., with its strategic contingents of longshoremen, port truckers, construction, forestry and other workers, has immense potential social power. But this power is shackled by a nationalist, pro-capitalist union bureaucracy together with its political allies in the NDP. Against divisive scapegoating and chauvinism, the proletariat needs to mount a class-struggle fight against the capitalist order—and that can only be based on the understanding that labour and capital have no common interests.

A successful fight for jobs, decent housing and health care for all hinges on the struggle to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Such a party would champion the cause of all the oppressed, fighting for a socialist revolution to sweep away the entire capitalist system. A workers government would rip the means of production from the hands of the exploiters, and seize the ritzy office towers, mansions and empty condos in order to transform them into housing and other socially useful facilities. It would create a socialist planned economy in the interests of the whole of the working people. ***Native, Asian, black or white—workers of the world unite!*** ■

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China Is Not Capitalist

China and the World Economy: Fact vs. Fiction

We print below an edited presentation by Bruce André of the *WV* Editorial Board to a Spartacist League meeting in New York City last month. Comrade André's talk debunks some of the more pervasive myths being circulated in the press about the Chinese economy and explains some recent economic developments.

Key to understanding China's economy is that, contrary to the claims of most bourgeois pundits and self-described socialists, it is *not* a capitalist country. The 1949 Revolution overthrew the rule of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords and liberated the country from imperialist bondage. The subsequent creation of a collectivized, planned economy laid the basis for a surge in industrial development and enormous gains for the miserably poor worker and peasant masses. The revolution, which was carried out by Mao Zedong's peasant-based People's Liberation Army, created a workers state, but one that was deformed from its inception by the rule of the parasitic Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bureaucracy. Despite major capitalist inroads, China remains a workers state with the core of its economy collectivized, including nationalized banks and major industries. Although a small capitalist class has emerged on the mainland, it does not hold state power.

The imperialists who "lost China" in 1949 are committed to getting it back in order to once again exploit its masses at will. This can be seen in the U.S.'s increasing military aggression against China, currently focused on the South China Sea. In its latest provocation, the U.S. has scheduled naval maneuvers in the next two weeks "inside the 12-nautical mile zones that China claims as territory around some of the islands it has constructed in the Spratly chain" (*Financial Times*, 8 October). This belligerence goes hand in hand with economic pressure. The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which the Obama administration is spearheading, is an anti-China bloc dominated by U.S. and Japanese imperialism and including nine other capitalist states as well as Vietnam, a deformed workers state.

The International Communist League opposes the TPP as well as the U.S. military maneuvers as part of our unconditional military defense of China against the imperialists and other capitalist states and against internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we give no political support to the CCP regime, which must be swept away by the Chinese proletariat through a political revolution that creates a regime of workers democracy committed to a program of world socialist revolution.

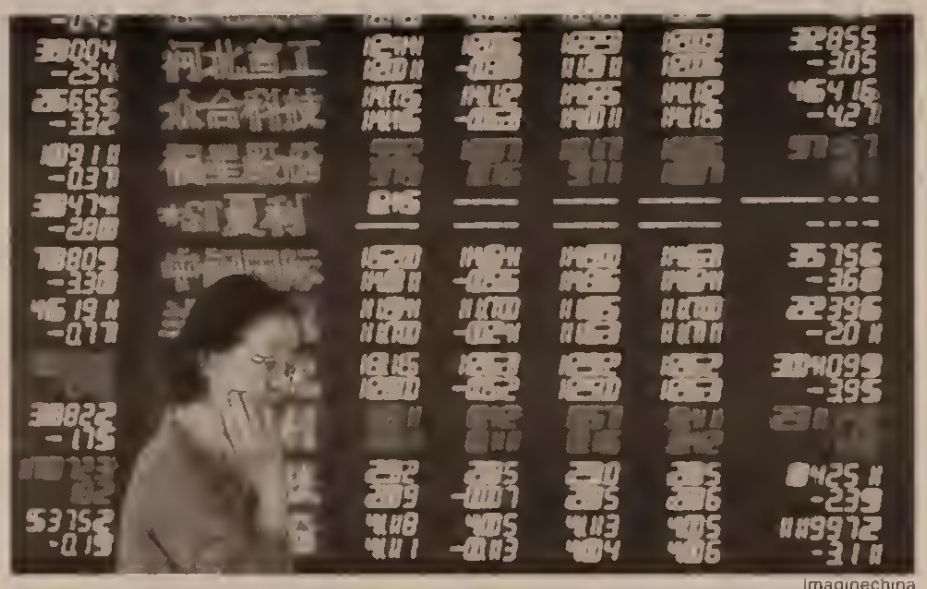
From Mao's time to today, CCP policies have expressed the nationalist Stalinist dogma that socialism—a society of material abundance marked by the disappearance of classes—can be built in a single country, even one as historically backward as China. This program is utterly counterposed to the Marxist program of world proletarian revolution—the prerequisite to creating an internationally planned economy that would eliminate scarcity by harnessing the most sophisticated technology, which today is concentrated in the advanced capitalist countries. Under Mao, the planned economy was immensely distorted by the rule of the bureaucracy, which made a virtue of economic autarky. To correct the imbalances this bureaucratic mismanagement created and to spur modernization and growth, beginning some 35 years ago subsequent regimes introduced market reforms, loosening state control over production and trade. Capitalist investment was also invited into certain areas.

This experience is far from unique to China. In the July 1988 Spartacist pamphlet *"Market Socialism" in Eastern Europe*, we addressed the effects of such measures in several East European deformed workers states, before their destruction through capitalist counterrevolution. We observed that within the framework of Stalinism, there is "an inherent tendency to replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasingly the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency." We also refer readers to our series "China's 'Market Reforms': A Trotskyist Analysis" (*WV* Nos. 874 and 875, 4 August and 1 September 2006).

* * *

This has been a volatile summer for financial markets, resulting in some sharp losses, especially for banks, hedge funds and other big capitalist investors. That, in turn, has generated a renewed round in the bourgeois press of seeking to explain the problems of the world economy as resulting from a supposedly mounting crisis in China.

On August 24, following a series of sharp declines on the New York Stock Exchange, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted almost 600 points. As it happened, this came after a series of major sell-offs on the Shanghai stock exchange. The financial press in this country started screaming about a supposed "meltdown" in China. The Taaffeites of the Committee for a Workers' International, who claim that capitalism has been restored in China, fretted about "a China-led global recession" ("China crisis triggers panic on global markets," socialistworld.net, 25 August).



Imaginechina

September 29: Brokerage house stock ticker screen in Fuyang, city in eastern China, shows stock price fall.

ZUMA

High-speed train factory in Changsha, Hunan province, March 2015. Massive state investment in transportation, housing and other fixed assets kept Chinese economy booming while 2007-08 global financial crisis drove capitalist economies into recession.

Now, first of all, the sell-off on Wall Street had, at bottom, nothing to do with China. It was a classic example of a financial bubble deflating (somewhat). Starting in 2009 and running until a year ago, the Federal Reserve printed money to the tune of some $3.5 trillion and gave it out free of charge to the banks and other financial institutions. They, in turn, invested in stocks and other risky assets in the U.S. and around the world, artificially stimulating the global economy. A lot of those financial bubbles—from the prices of minerals and other raw materials to stock and bond prices in Third World countries—are now losing steam. The fact that the pinprick that let some air out of the stock market bubble in the U.S. came from a fall in the Shanghai stock market was purely accidental, with no underlying economic significance. The pinprick could just as easily have come from rumors about Fed policy, or almost anything else.

Secondly, the state of the Shanghai stock market says nothing about the state of the Chinese economy as a whole. Unlike stock markets in the U.S. and other capitalist powers, movements on the Chinese stock market have almost no impact on investment decisions in that country. Only about 5 percent of private-sector funding in China is generated on the stock market—to say nothing of the dominant state-owned sector! If the NY Stock Exchange lost some 40 percent of its value in two months, as the Chinese stock market did this summer, we would be looking at a global depression.

The collapse of the Shanghai exchange surely represented a political black eye for the Beijing regime, which for the past couple of years has been encouraging the country's middle class to boost their income by investing in stocks while preaching that the stock market was going to play a "decisive role" in allocating resources. That political commitment by the Beijing bureaucrats no doubt explains why they have spent an incredible $236 billion of the country's valuable reserves trying to shore up stock prices since the rout began in June.

Thirdly, even if the Shanghai stock market collapse reflected a growing economic crisis in China, which it did not, that would hardly portend an economic crisis in the U.S. The U.S. has a huge domestic market that accounts for some 70 percent of its Gross Domestic Product. The Chinese market for U.S. exports accounts for only 1 percent of this country's GDP.

The Yuan and You

Meanwhile, in mid August Beijing devalued the yuan, allowing the value of its currency to fall 4.4 percent in one week. This was viewed in the U.S. financial press as another sign that the Chinese economy is supposedly entering into a deep crisis. The devaluation was presented as a panicked reaction by Beijing, seeking to head off an economic downturn by boosting exports. (A lower exchange rate for the yuan makes Chinese exports cheaper on international markets.) In a *Monthly Review* (27 August) article titled "The Devaluation of the Yuan," Indian economist Prabhat Patnaik proclaimed: "China's devaluation of the currency portends a serious accentuation of the world capitalist crisis." Patnaik foresees a coming currency war in which China desperately tries to stay afloat by increasing its exports at the expense of its competitors internationally.

Let's put this currency devaluation in context. Back in 2005, under strong pressure from Washington, China basically tied its exchange rate to the dollar. That resulted in an upward revaluation of the yuan that continued over the next ten years, which was almost certainly not exactly what Chinese officials had anticipated. As the U.S. Federal Reserve, following the financial crisis, began printing money like there was no tomorrow, that logically should have led to a weakened dollar. But the economic stagnation in Japan and Europe, to say nothing of

the ongoing Greek debt crisis, ended up making the dollar look like the world's safe haven for finance capitalists. Capital flowed into the U.S., strengthening the dollar—as well as the yuan, which was now linked to the dollar. The upward valuation cut into China's exports because it made it more expensive to purchase goods made in China and priced in yuan. This was especially true for importers in Europe and Japan, since the euro and yen were weakening.

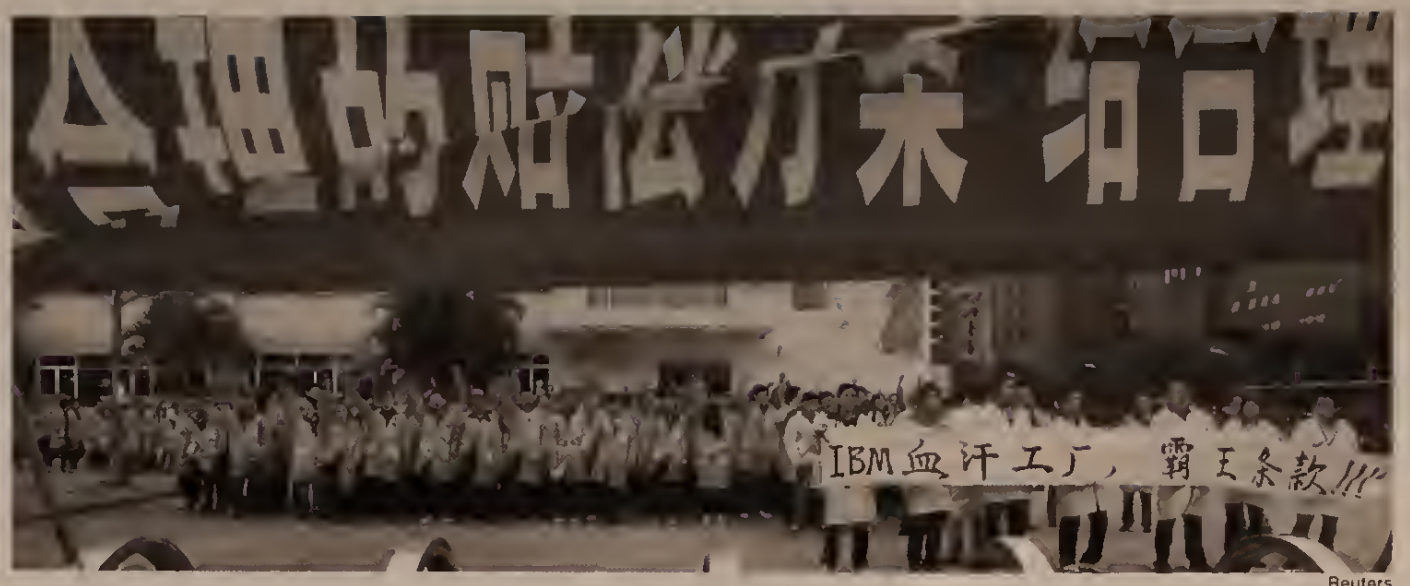
The best way to judge the economic impact on China is to look at the yuan's trade-weighted exchange rate over the past decade. This is the exchange rate of the yuan not only against the dollar but against a basket of the currencies of China's main trading partners, weighted to reflect the importance of each of those countries in China's trade. A 15 August *Economist* article included a graph showing that from 2005 to mid 2015, the yuan's trade-weighted exchange rate increased by fully 50 percent. In other words, if you just look at the impact of the appreciation of the yuan over that period, it would tend on average to make Chinese goods 50 percent more expensive on international markets.

In that context, the depreciation of the yuan in August was anything but earth-shattering. In fact, the *Economist* questions whether it is even accurate to speak of a devaluation. It points out that the People's Bank of China (the central bank) first stood aside, letting the market play more of a role in setting the yuan's exchange rate; then it quickly backtracked, spending tens of billions of dollars of the country's reserves to prop up the yuan and keep it from falling further. As the *Economist* put it: "The initial 2% devaluation only undid the previous ten days' worth of appreciation in trade-weighted terms. The yuan remains more than 10% stronger against the currencies of China's trading partners than it was a year ago."

One constraint on the People's Bank of China is that a bigger one-off devaluation would simply cause other countries to follow suit, undoing the effect of the devaluation in terms of boosting exports. And a widespread perception that the yuan is headed toward a series of devaluations would accelerate the already bothersome flight of capital out of the country.

All of this is not to say that the yuan depreciation, such as it is, will have no impact on global trade. As of mid 2015, Chinese exports were down 8.3 percent over the previous 12 months, clearly due to the economic slowdown in much of the capitalist world. The yuan revaluation can be expected to provide a bit of a boost to Chinese exports. Meanwhile, a number of Asian countries with strong export exposure to China will be hurt to some degree—Taiwan, Malaysia and South Korea export more than 5 percent of their GDP to China.

In Europe, the yuan devaluation drove down the stock price of a number of companies that sell in China as investors worried about possible losses. But as the dust cleared it was not at all obvious that, overall, European companies would suffer much pain. China is the largest market for major German car manufacturers, but it turns out that those companies are largely hedged against currency fluctuations. And a significant number of the cars that they sell in China are made there, which mitigates the impact of currency-rate changes. The *Wall Street Journal* (11 August) favorably quoted a prominent stock analyst who declared that the overall impact of the devaluation on the German auto industry would "effectively be zero."



Reuters

Striking workers protest against sweatshop conditions at IBM factory in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, March 2014.

What Crisis?

That said, the widespread claim that Beijing devalued the yuan in order to head off a burgeoning crisis in China manifestly has no basis in fact. In the words of economist Nicholas Lardy in a *New York Times* op-ed piece (26 August), the talk of crisis in China is a "false alarm." Virtually everyone agrees that China's economy is growing at something like 7 percent per year, a level that no advanced capitalist country today could even hope to attain. True, China's phenomenal rate of growth is down somewhat from the rates of recent years (9.7 percent in 2013 and 8.3 percent in 2014). But keep in mind that those figures express China's growth in year-over-year percentage terms. From 2007 to 2013, China tripled its output of goods and services. Last year China accounted for almost 40 percent of all economic growth worldwide. In other words, 7 percent growth this year represents a much higher total output than 14 percent growth did in 2007.

Furthermore, the slip in percentage growth is hardly surprising. Staggering rates of state-driven investment kept the Chinese economy booming while the capitalist world was reeling from the global financial crisis of 2008-09. That gigantic investment in housing, transportation and other fixed assets appears to have topped out at a rate equivalent to one half of the country's GDP—an extraordinary level of investment. In just two years, from 2011 to 2012, China constructed some 3.8 billion square meters of housing, enough to comfortably house well over 100 million people. (The Taaffeites side with neoliberal economists, well to the right of Keynesians like Paul Krugman, by attacking Beijing for deficit spending. Their 25 August article does not address the most obvious question: How was "capitalist" China uniquely able to make enormous strides during the global financial crisis?)

One could add that the devaluation of the yuan comes as Beijing is setting up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and has committed hundreds of billions of dollars to building the new Silk Road Economic Belt through Central Asia to Europe and maritime routes through South Asia to Africa. All of this, along with the burgeoning Chinese investment in Africa and South America, speaks to an extension of China's economic and financial footprint globally, not to economic crisis in China.

Those pushing the notion of an impending economic crisis in China point to the obvious bubbles that have developed, such as in real estate. With the government holding well over $3 trillion in reserves, there is little likelihood of the national banking system facing collapse. Recent articles have reported that state stimulus programs have resulted in excess industrial capacity, for example in cement manufacturing. A planned economy under the rule of workers and peasants councils would minimize such imbalances. In the event of unused capacity, workers in nationalized industries could be retrained and employed in other industries. Obviously, private businesses cannot and will not do this.

Some Prospects and Questions

So, what can we say about the state of the Chinese economy? Behind the economic statistics, what we are focused on is the potential for working-class revolt and political fracturing of the Communist Party regime.

The first question is: As China's explosive economic growth slows down somewhat, will there be enough jobs to prevent mass unemployment? Let's first look at the current distribution of China's labor force among the main sectors of the economy. There has been a sharp decline in the proportion of the labor force engaged in agriculture, from about 47 percent in 2004 to under 30 percent a decade later. That decrease was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of the industrial workforce until about 2011, when it leveled off at about 30 percent. Meanwhile, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of workers engaged in the service sector, from about 30 percent in 2004 to over 40 percent in 2014.

An important fact about these service-sector jobs is that, for the most part, they are presumably not highly productive. Assuming that the service sector continues to expand, one can imagine that it would be an efficient mechanism for absorbing labor leaving the agricultural sector while keeping a damper on unemployment. The precondition is that the personal income of Chinese consumers must be high enough to support an expanding service sector. That seems to be the direction that things have been going in. Personal consumption appears to be on track to replace fixed-asset investment as the country's main engine of economic growth. Last year, personal consumption accounted for 51 percent of GDP, up from 48 percent in 2013. Sales of cars and household appliances, as well as overall retail sales, increased. In the first half of this year, personal consumption accounted for 60 percent of the country's economic growth.

More than one third of China's labor force consists of migrant workers from rural regions, presumably the lowest-paid section of the industrial workforce. During the 1980s and '90s, the real wages of Chinese workers hardly increased, despite huge gains in productivity—the simple transfer of a laborer from a backward rural farm to an urban factory represents an enormous increase in productivity. After 2009, the wages of migrant workers increased dramatically—almost doubling in five years. Those increased labor costs were a major factor in undercutting China's export-led growth.

The question that, to my mind, is posed by all of this is: What happens when the pool of migrant labor begins to dry up? From what I can tell, that day is not necessarily very far off. The country's population aged 15 to 24 decreased from about 250 million in 1990 to about 200 million in 2015. This is caused in part by the regime's one-child policy. Last year, China had 14.5 million fewer migrant workers aged 16 to 20 than in 2008, a decline of 60 percent.

China's working-age population, aged between 16 and 60, currently stands at about 916 million. That number has been falling for the past three years, at an increasing rate. In February of this year, the total number of migrant workers leaving their rural homes for jobs in the cities fell 3.6 percent year-on-year. It was the first recorded drop in the flow of migrant workers. For the moment, the decline in the number of young migrant workers has been offset by increased employment of older workers. From 2008 to 2014, the portion of migrant workers aged over 50 increased from 11.4 percent to 17.1 percent. Some 14.6 percent more migrant workers were over 50 years of age last year compared to 2013, the biggest increase in three years.

As the flow of migrant workers from rural areas starts to slacken seriously, economic development is going to depend much more heavily on increasing productivity. As in the case of improving the quality of industrial goods, the bureaucracy is, by its nature, ill prepared to tackle improvements in efficiency and innovation. This point was explained by Leon Trotsky in relation to the Soviet Union in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). ■

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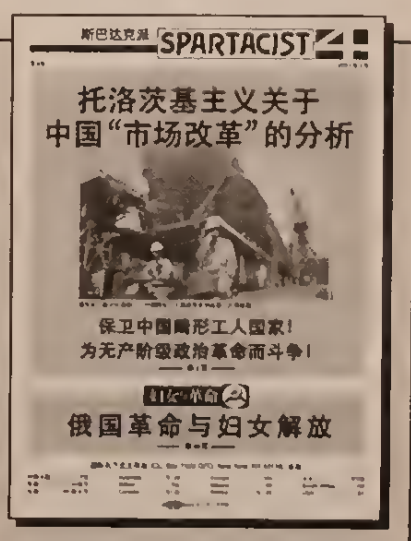

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Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

The final overturn of the Russian Revolution was a shattering defeat for working people in the former Soviet Union and everywhere else, including in the U.S. The U.S. ruling class proclaimed itself the sole "superpower," swaggering and slaughtering its way around the globe, while bleeding dry the working class at home and grinding the black and Latino poor into the dirt.

Washington's Near East Quagmire

Since then the U.S. has extended its tentacles ever farther across the Near East. In 1991, Bush the Elder launched a punitive war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. A hallmark of that war was the dropping of two 2,000-pound "bunker buster" precision "smart bombs" on a civilian air raid shelter in Baghdad. Our headline read, "Hundreds Killed as U.S. Deliberately Bombs Civilian Shelter: George Bush—Baby Killer" (*WV* No. 521, 1 March 1991).

A decade later, with the Soviet Union gone, Bush's son invaded Afghanistan in the wake of the criminal World Trade Center attack, ostensibly to get the Taliban regime that was harboring Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Scion of a wealthy Saudi family and veteran of the CIA anti-Soviet operation in Afghanistan, bin Laden had by then turned his attention to other "infidels," including his former imperialist benefactors. The U.S.-led 2003 invasion of Iraq, which had nothing to do with bin Laden or the twin towers attack, followed in short order.

The bloody toppling by the U.S. of Saddam Hussein, whose bonapartist regime was based on the Sunni minority, had a huge impact not only on Iraq but on the region as a whole. The destruction of the social fabric of Iraq has threatened to upset the intricate and fragile structure erected by the British and French imperialists when they took over the Near East from the defunct Ottoman Empire following World War I. This imperialist carve-up amalgamated different prenational peoples in artificial colonial or semicolonial states under the precept of divide and rule. Short of workers revolutions that could have channeled widespread anti-imperialist sentiment into the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East, this ramshackle system could only be maintained through brutal imperial or bonapartist rule. Today, the prospect of a new carve-up of the region is increasingly posed.

Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, etc. were not nation-states but patchwork entities created by the imperialists (as is the case in much of sub-Saharan Africa as well). The rulers of the arrogant American Empire seem to "learn nothing and forget nothing." They decapitated the Iraqi state, unleashing a chaotic and bloody free-for-all among the Sunni, Shi'ite and Kurdish populations. In so doing, they ended up benefiting Iran, which for decades the Western imperialists have sought to weaken and isolate. Iran now influences the rump Iraqi regime that is dominated by the Shi'ite majority, incurring the wrath of embittered Iraqi Sunnis and in turn fueling the growth of ISIS and other Sunni forces which target not only Shi'ites but also the U.S. and the West in general.

AFP

Students in downtown Kabul, 1981. Soviet intervention provided huge gains for Afghan women and offered prospect of modernizing Afghanistan.

Even as he was trying to extricate the U.S. from the Iraqi quagmire, Obama embarked on the NATO bombing of Libya in 2011 that overthrew the regime of strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi and set the stage for the current bloody chaos in that country. Moreover, the hell unleashed by the U.S. imperialists and their allies across the entire region has forced millions of people to flee from their homes, to neighboring countries and to Europe.

In Syria, Obama sought to undermine the regime of Bashar al-Assad, throwing Washington's weight behind an insurgent opposition to the Assad regime, a key ally of Iran and a client of Russia going back to the Soviet era. Based on the relatively small Alawite sect, the Assad regime could only stay in power by wielding an iron fist against all opponents. Meanwhile, the "moderate" opposition bankrolled by the U.S. was nothing but a conduit for U.S. money and arms to various Sunni fundamentalist militias, including the Syrian branch of Al Qaeda and its later offshoot, ISIS. Marxists have no side in the ethnic/sectarian civil war in Syria. Of course the working class of the entire world does have a side against the U.S. imperialists and their allies in the Near East.

After ISIS seized huge chunks of Iraq and Syria last year, the U.S. intervened militarily in the Syrian civil war, bombing ISIS forces in coordination with its spotters and foot soldiers on the ground, particularly the Kurdish nationalists. At that point we declared: "revolutionary Marxists have a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and their proxies, including the Syrian Kurdish nationalists, the [Iraqi Kurdish] *pesh merga*, the Baghdad government and its Shi'ite militias" ("Down With U.S. War Against ISIS!", *WV* No. 1055, 31 October 2014).

The U.S.-led "coalition" against ISIS includes Saudi Arabia, a hideously reactionary theocracy rooted in Wahhabi Sunni fundamentalism. The Saudi regime is waging a vicious and bloody war against Houthi-led forces in Yemen, continues to fund all manner of anti-Western Islamist groups in Syria (and elsewhere) and has much in common with the social strictures of ISIS. The Kingdom is notorious for the barbaric practice of public beheadings—over 100 people were executed in the first half of this year. Another U.S. coalition partner is Turkey, whose main target is not ISIS but the Kurdish nationalists. The Erdogan regime in Turkey has re-launched and escalated a murderous reign of terror against the Kurds.

Our central opposition is to the U.S., its imperialist allies and regional coalition partners. The recent military intervention by Vladimir Putin's capitalist Russia, which has been met with hostility by the U.S. and its allies, does not change our position. Russia's main concern lies in propping up its Syrian client regime and in maintaining its only foothold in the Near East, especially its sole naval facility on the Mediterranean. Capitalist Russia has a huge nuclear arsenal, inherited from the Soviet Union, and a large military, but it is not imperialist and it is not a contender for global domination; it is, for now, simply another player in the squalid civil war in Syria in which the international working class has no side. While our main opposition is to the imperialists, we also oppose all the other capitalist powers involved (including Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) and call for them to leave.

Socialism or Barbarism

Ghoulish atrocities such as the Kunduz hospital bombing are intrinsic to imperialist wars and occupations, which seek to instill terror in the civilian population. During World War II, the U.S. and its British imperialist ally were no more hesitant than their Nazi counterparts to carry out mass murder, albeit under a "democratic" facade. Intense Allied bombing of the industrial city of Dresden in Germany and of Tokyo and Osaka in Japan resulted in upwards of 300,000 deaths, as civilian (and particularly working-class) areas were turned into infernos (see "The Hidden History of U.S. Terror Bombing," *WV* No. 521, 1 March 1991). This was capped by the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The imperialists employ a particularly vengeful brutality against those who challenge their rule. In its counterrevolutionary wars against the forces of the North Korean deformed workers state in the early 1950s and the Stalinist-led workers and peasants of Vietnam in the 1960s and early '70s, the U.S. and its allies were responsible for the deaths of some six million people in total. We hailed the victory of the Vietnamese revolutionary fighters in 1975 over the U.S. and its local puppet forces.

In the intervening decades, U.S. imperialism has grown only more barbaric and irrational, having lost its economic hegemony while still dominating the world militarily. It must be brought down by a re-awakened proletariat, the multiracial U.S. working class that is its Achilles' heel. Socialism or barbarism—those are the alternatives that have confronted humanity since the emergence of the imperialist system over a century ago. Either the conquest of power by the international proletariat and the creation of a global egalitarian order or the downfall of civilization. The task of building revolutionary Marxist parties molded in the image of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and subject to the discipline of a reforged democratic-centralist Fourth International remains as urgent as ever. ■

Karl Marx...

(continued from page 2)

land and hands it over to the landlord because of "non-economic constraint"), then into money-rent (rent in kind, which is converted into money—the *obrok* [quit rent] of old Russia—as a result of the development of commodity production), and finally into capitalist rent, when the peasant is replaced by the agricultural *entrepreneur*, who cultivates the soil with the help of hired labour. In connection with this analysis of the "genesis of capitalistic ground rent," note should be taken of a number of profound ideas (of particular importance to backward countries like Russia) expressed by Marx regarding the evolution of capitalism in agriculture. "The transformation of rent in kind into money-rent is furthermore not only inevitably accompanied, but even anticipated, by the formation of a class of propertyless day-labourers, who hire themselves out for money. During their genesis, when this new class appears but sporadically, the custom necessarily develops among the more prosperous peasants, subject to rent payments, of exploiting agricultural wage-labourers for their own account, much as in feudal times, when the more well-to-do peasant serfs themselves also held serfs. In this way, they gradually acquire the possibility of accumulating a certain amount of wealth and themselves becoming transformed into future capitalists. The old self-employed possessors of land themselves thus give rise to a nursery school for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned by the general development of capitalist production beyond the bounds of the countryside" (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 332). "The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour; it also created the home market" (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 778). In their turn, the impoverishment and ruin of the rural population play a part in the creation, for capital, of a reserve army of labour. In every capitalist country "part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing [i.e., non-agricultural—*Lenin*] proletariat.... This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing.... The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism" (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 668). The peasant's

Dorothea Lange

Universal History Archive

Left: Destitute migrant farm worker family in California, 1936. Right: Collective farm, Soviet Ukraine, 1930s.

UAW...

(continued from page 12)

has as much reality as the promised but never delivered cap on the number of second-tier workers from contract talks four years ago. But in the unlikely event that the company adheres entirely to this prolonged wage progression, those hired since 2007 would remain second-class union members, saddled with an inferior health plan and a 401(k) in place of a defined-benefit pension. Tellingly, even if all UAW members tomorrow earned the current top-tier wage of $28 an hour, FCA's costs per worker would be comparable to those at Toyota's non-union U.S. operations.

The very purpose of the tier system imposed in the 2007 contract was to gouge UAW workers in order to make the domestic automakers more competitive against their foreign rivals that have set up non-union shops in this country, primarily in the South. For Fiat (now FCA) CEO Sergio Marchionne, who introduced himself to the UAW during the 2009 Chrysler bankruptcy proceedings by insisting the union accept a "culture of poverty," the gutting of the union is on track. At every step, the pro-capitalist union misleaders have accommodated the bosses, including by helping slash wages. In 2007, then UAW president Ron Gettelfinger boasted that "the gap in labor costs" between the Detroit Three and the "foreign transplant operations will be largely or completely eliminated by the end of the contracts." Today, Williams, who embraces the notorious union-buster Marchionne literally as well as figuratively, continues to facilitate the plan the FCA chief outlined to investors last year: "We need to freeze the tier ones and make them a dying class."

The new deal, like the first, also falls far short in many other respects. Left intact is the Alternative Work Schedule, which rotates workers between day, afternoon and night shifts over short periods of time, jeopardizing health and safety. As one worker told *WV*, "I trade my body for a paycheck." Enhanced profit sharing and productivity bonuses, intended to blur the class line and grease the skids for speedup, put conditions on money that should just get added to base wages. Retirees, all but told to shut up and die at the time of the bankruptcy, are tossed a lousy $1,000 car voucher for their many years of sweat and toil. And while the union bureaucrats have—for the moment—put on hold their push for a health care co-op (at least at FCA), they still insist on finding "smart solutions" to help the company avoid rising health care costs. One such "solution" is tucked away in the proposed contract: top-tier workers will be forced to pay deductibles for the first time if the "Cadillac tax" mandated by Obama's Affordable Care Act kicks in.

Bettmann

Striking auto workers picket Detroit GM plant, September 1970.

Enough already! Williams tried to downplay the resounding opposition to his co-op project, claiming it was due to a botched communication effort. No, a stinker is a stinker. The matter is simple: the automakers should foot the bill for any and all expenses (including the Cadillac tax) associated with providing top-level health care to all workers (and their families), who risk life and limb to churn out cars for the bosses' profit. The health care cost studies proposed by the UAW tops are more smoke and mirrors from a union leadership that goes out of its way to be company-friendly, that is to say, loyal lapdogs of the greedy employers who amass fortunes by exploiting labor.

WV Photo

September 28: Workers from Fiat Chrysler Belvidere Assembly Plant, Illinois, denounce initial sellout contract that was overwhelmingly rejected.

Accepting the terms set by the capitalists is the road to ruin for the union and its membership. Take the false choice that the UAW bureaucrats present as "the give and take between job security, and good pay and benefits." Over the years, this "give and take" has brought everything from the spinning off of parts workers and growth in temps to the institution of tiers—everything, that is, except job security and good pay and benefits. Despite modest membership gains since 2012, the UAW represents 42 percent fewer Detroit Three workers than it did in 2005. Meanwhile, the top-tier UAW wage for assembly workers has remained frozen since 2003 (with a marginal increase included in the FCA agreement).

Today, union officials claim to be "proactive" in response to job losses, boasting of measures in the deal like "sourcing conferences" and "strategic partnership initiatives" with the company purchasing department. Such efforts to encourage so-called insourcing are supposed to convince the automaker to bring contracted-out jobs back under the FCA umbrella by offering to have union members do them for subpar wages. Yet more tiers to save the bosses money! In the 1970s, Detroit Three new hires started at over 90 percent full pay and reached top rate after three months. Almost all production workers across a company made the same wage, with some loose change for different classifications and shift premiums.

Far from undertaking an industry-wide strike to restore wage parity, or a militant fight to organize the unorganized at the suppliers, much less auto plants in the South, the UAW tops instead act despicably like labor brokers, reinforcing divisions among the workers and fueling a race to the bottom. The same goes for all the finger-wagging at Mexico, where some FCA auto production is scheduled to move. The framework of U.S. auto worker versus Mexican auto worker is a recipe for driving down wages and working conditions on both sides of the border. Marchionne certainly is no stranger to divide-and-conquer; in recent years, he foisted major concessions on union auto workers in Italy by threatening to move production out of that country (with the U.S. as one possible destination). The way forward is to proceed from the unity of interests of auto workers in the U.S., Mexico and elsewhere against the common class enemy—the Detroit Three auto bosses who bleed workers dry regardless of locale—which would open the prospect of joint struggle.

UAW members have every reason to distrust Williams and his gang. The labor traitors are, for the second time in as many weeks, attempting to sell a bill of goods. Auto workers must not give in to resignation over the possibility of doing any better. Neither should they let their just anger at the union bureaucrats take the form of refusing to pay union dues—a danger opened up by recent "right to work" laws in Michigan and Indiana. Such a step would simply weaken the union in its coming battles. Instead, all members should insist that their hard-earned dues money go into the union strike fund or toward organizing drives—and above all not get wasted on the electoral campaigns of Democratic Party politicians, who no less than Republicans are the political representatives of the bosses. Michigan went "right to work" a couple of years ago after the UAW tops and the rest of labor officialdom channeled protest against the anti-union forces into the dead end of reliance on Democrats and the ballot box.

The Detroit auto giants are today solidly in the black thanks to the massive concessions shoved down the throats of the workers with the active assistance of the UAW bureaucracy. This time around, the automakers are willing to pay out a little to buy labor peace; but for workers to truly get theirs, it is going to take a fight. Given their abiding respect for the bosses' rules and bottom line, the sellouts atop the union are utterly incapable of directing any serious battle. It is well past time that they be shown the door.

The forging of a class-struggle leadership would go a long way toward transforming the unions into battalions of organized labor, capable of fighting for quality health care that is free for everyone at the point of delivery and jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, among other causes of the entire working people. Armed with a program based on the understanding that the working class shares no interest with the bosses, a union with the power of the UAW could head up a broader fight against capitalism's ravages, enlisting support from the rest of the proletariat as well as the unemployed and black and immigrant communities in the crosshairs of the capitalist rulers. This perspective demands the building of a multiracial revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of capitalist production for profit once and for all. ■

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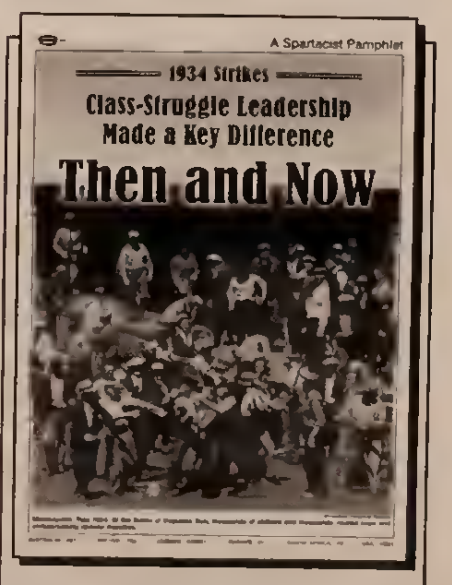
private ownership of the land he tills is the foundation of small-scale production and the condition for its prospering and achieving the classical form. But such small-scale production is compatible only with a narrow and primitive framework of production and society. Under capitalism the "exploitation of the peasants differs only in form from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: capital. The individual capitalists exploit the individual peasants through mortgages and usury; the capitalist class exploits the peasant class through the state taxes" (*The Class Struggles in France*). "The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages" (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*). As a rule the peasant cedes to capitalist society, i.e., to the capitalist class, even a part of the wages, sinking "to the level of the Irish tenant farmer—all under the pretence of being a private proprietor" (*The Class Struggles in France*). What is "one of the reasons why grain prices are lower in countries with predominant small-peasant land proprietorship than in countries with a capitalist mode of production"? (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 340.) It is that the peasant hands over gratis to society (i.e., the capitalist class) a part of his surplus product. "This lower price [of grain and other agricultural produce—*Lenin*] is consequently a result of the producers' poverty and by no means of their labour productivity" (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 340). Under capitalism the small-holding system, which is the normal form of small-scale production, degenerates, collapses, and perishes. "Proprietorship of land parcels, by its very nature, excludes the development of social productive forces of labour, social forms of labour, social concentration of capital, large-scale cattle raising, and the progressive application of science. Usury and a taxation system must impoverish it everywhere. The expenditure of capital in the price of the land withdraws this capital from cultivation. An infinite fragmentation of means of production, and isolation of the producers themselves." (Co-operative societies, i.e., associations of small peasants, while playing an extremely progressive bourgeois role, only weaken this tendency, without eliminating it; nor must it be forgotten that these co-operative societies do much for the well-to-do peasants, and very little—next to nothing—for the mass of poor peasants; then the associations themselves become exploiters of hired labour.) "Monstrous waste of human energy. Progressive deterioration of conditions of production and increased prices of means of production—an inevitable law of proprietorship of parcels." In agriculture, as in industry, capitalism transforms the process of production only at the price of the "martyrdom of the producer." "The dispersion of the rural labourers over larger areas breaks their power of resistance, while concentration increases that of the town operatives. In modern agriculture, as in the urban industries, the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil.... Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer" (*Capital*, Vol. I, end of Chapter 13).

[COMING UP NEXT: SOCIALISM]



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Panthers...

(continued from page 12)

anti-Communist AFL-CIO misleaders over the integrated labor movement, in defeating the black Uncle Toms in the inner cities and their capitalist patrons in the Democratic Party.

But the BPP turned its back on the multiracial working class. Instead, the Panthers substituted their own militants for the organized power of the working class. However heroic, they were no match for the armed might of the capitalist state.

The Panthers Pick Up the Gun and Are Defeated

Taking advantage of California's then-permissive gun laws, the Panthers applied their "pick up the gun" theory. At first this tactic seemed successful as Newton's armed patrols in Oakland went unmolested. The Panthers also held a rally protesting the police murder of a young black man, Denzil Dowell, in Richmond, California, which the cops ran like a Southern town. Again, they succeeded in facing down the cops. The documentary shows footage of the most spectacular action of the BPP, the one that put them on the map nationwide. That was the armed Panther march, led by Bobby Seale, into the state Capitol in Sacramento, to protest the Mulford Bill. This bill (named after a white politician from a wealthy Oakland enclave) was drafted specifically to disarm the Panthers.

The scenes from Sacramento in the documentary, with then California governor Ronald Reagan and state legislators cowering, capture the spirit that inspired the rapid growth of the Panthers. They are also a powerful indictment of gun control laws, at the time pushed by right-wing Republicans and today by liberals. What is abundantly clear is that the purpose of such laws is to disarm black and working people, ensuring that the cops maintain their monopoly on the means of violence together with their fascist and criminal counterparts.

Taken aback by the Panthers' flamboyance and uncertain how much support they had in the ghettos, the state's authorities at first proceeded with some caution. But beginning with the wounding and jailing of Huey Newton on frame-up charges of killing a cop in October 1967, and gaining steam with the Oakland police killing of 17-year-old Bobby Hutton and the arrest of Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver in April 1968, a coordinated national campaign to wipe out the Panthers was launched by the FBI under the Democratic president Lyndon Johnson and carried out by local police forces. In many cases they had the active collaboration of cultural nationalist groups like Ron Karenga's United Slaves organization, whose members killed L.A. Panther leaders Bunchy Carter and John Huggins on the UCLA campus in 1969.

While Nelson's documentary doesn't mention the role of these black cultural nationalists, who glorified the heritage of African kings and queens, it very powerfully depicts the murderous vendetta launched by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI. Raving that the Panthers were the "greatest threat to the internal security of the country," Hoover revived COINTELPRO, the counterintelligence program that had originally been set up in 1956 with its main target being the Communist Party. In a memo distributed to all FBI offices in the country, Hoover declared: "The purpose of this new counter-intelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalists." What Hoover meant by "neutralize" was spelled out in 1968, "the Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries."

AP

Bobby Seale campaigning for Oakland mayor as a Democrat, May 1973.

COINTELPRO unleashed the most savage and systematic campaign of racist murder in modern American history. Much of this is vividly portrayed in archival footage in the documentary: from images of Panthers in Philadelphia stripped to their underwear and lined up against the wall outside their headquarters, to Oakland Panthers piling up sand bags in anticipation of a police assault on their office. There are depictions of Bobby Seale being bound and gagged like a latter-day slave on orders from the judge in the Chicago Seven trial. Footage of a rally outside the courthouse shows the powerful eloquence of the 20-year-old Fred Hampton, the deputy chairman of the BPP's Illinois branch.

There is also footage of the bloody aftermath of the 4 December 1969 pre-dawn raid by the Chicago police on Hampton's apartment. Orchestrated by the FBI, the cops unleashed an onslaught of bullets killing Hampton and 17-year-old Mark Clark in their beds as they slept. Among those interviewed in the movie is William O'Neill, the police informant who was Hampton's bodyguard and provided the floor plans to the apartment.

Four days after the assassination of Hampton and Clark, an L.A. SWAT team laid siege to the Panther office in L.A., firing thousands of rounds of ammunition. Although unmentioned in the documentary, a particular target of the LAPD was L.A. BPP leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a Vietnam War vet whose military knowledge was crucial to saving his life and those of his comrades. Geronimo was subsequently framed up for a 1968 murder and spent 27 years in prison (eight of them in solitary) before his conviction was overturned and he was freed in 1997; he died in 2011.

Virtually the entire leadership of the New York Black Panthers was arrested on trumped-up and completely ludicrous "conspiracy" charges, including that they were plotting to blow up the Bronx botanical gardens and other targets. Known as the Panther 21, they were held in jail for nearly two years. After a 13-month trial, the longest criminal proceeding in New York state history at the time, it took the jury only three hours to find all of the Panther 21 not guilty on all charges.

Thirty-eight Panthers were murdered under the FBI's COINTELPRO campaign. Hundreds of others were rounded up and thrown in jail. Today, 20 former Panthers, including America's foremost class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal who had been sentenced to death on frame-up charges of killing a Philadelphia cop, continue to languish in America's prison dungeons. While the number of former BPP members in jail is mentioned in the movie, nothing is said of their cases or the cause of fighting for their freedom. Among the former Black Panther supporters still incarcerated are Ed Poindexter, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa and Albert Woodfox, all of whom, like Mumia, receive monthly stipends from the Partisan Defense Committee. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

The Panthers Defend Themselves and Move Right

From May 1967 to December 1969 alone, the BPP was hit with 768 arrests and almost $5 million in bail bonds. Isolated, with state repression relentlessly bearing down on them, the Panthers shifted their focus to legal defense work. The Panthers' alliance with various white radical and liberal groups, like the Peace and Freedom Party, was not motivated by any realization that American society could only be revolutionized by an integrated working-class movement. Rather they were driven by the need to gain the broadest material and other support for their legal defense.

The documentary shows footage of Panthers at Jane Fonda's apartment, with former BPP members recalling the titillation of the white glitterati at the sight of them lining the walls in their black leather jackets and berets posturing as if they were about to shoot someone. The cultural wing of the liberal bourgeoisie paid handsomely for the experience of exposing their bourgeois sensibilities to the "black revolution" in safety, an expensive delight somewhat recalling the Roman arena.

What is left unsaid is the role played by the reformists of the Communist Party (CP), although one is left to wonder where all the white lawyers who defended the Panthers came from. Guided by the legal apparatus of the CP, the Panther leadership was influenced to launch a "united front against fascism" in 1969. Its purpose was to forge a political alliance with the liberal Democratic Party establishment

AP photos

LAPD siege of Los Angeles Black Panther headquarters, 8 December 1969, targeted Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), later framed up and imprisoned for 27 years.

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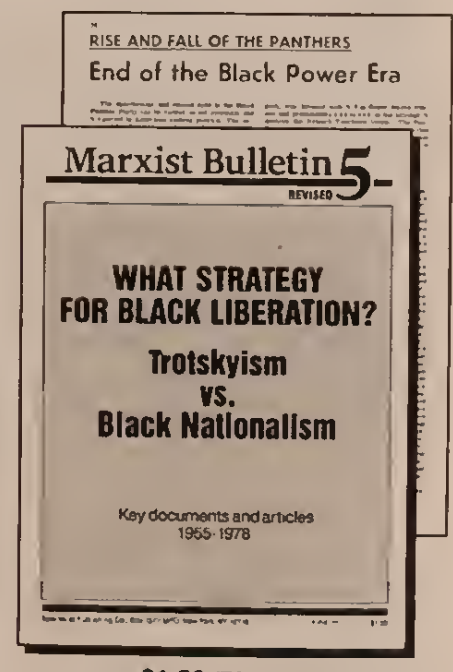

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against the Republican right on an essentially civil libertarian basis. The central demand of this abortive "united front" was community control of the cops. This demand combined liberal illusions about the nature of the capitalist state with black nationalist illusions that the oppression of black people could be ended through their control of ghetto institutions. Today, the call for community control of the police is again prominent in the Black Lives Matter protests against racist cop terror. Behind it is the deadly reformist illusion that the capitalist rulers can be pressured into dismantling their repressive state apparatus.

Along with their turn toward the liberals, the Panthers launched a series of ghetto social work programs, exemplified by their "breakfast for children" program. As the documentary portrays, these new activities were designed to gain support from black people in the inner cities who had not rallied behind the BPP's adventurist confrontations with the cops because they recognized that the balance of forces was decidedly not in their favor. In addition, the aim was to give the Panthers a more humanitarian image when facing middle-class white juries. To this day, the image of the Panthers feeding hungry black children is the one preferred by the reformist left and black petty-bourgeois radicals.

With the rulers of this country now snatching school lunches even out of the mouths of white kids, the idea of providing breakfast to hungry children must look pretty good to black youth and others. But the Panthers' "serve the people" programs were no competition for the money the U.S. government was throwing at poverty programs in the 1960s. This was hardly out of the "goodness of their hearts." Rather the aim was to pacify the inner cities following the ghetto uprisings. The bourgeoisie needed black youth as cannon fodder for their dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants and didn't want to fight a war on two fronts, at home and abroad.

But the problem with the Panthers' food, health and other programs was not that they didn't work but that they strengthened the BPP's paternalistic self-image: the Panthers as avenging angels of the black masses who in turn were seen as grateful clients, not as potential conscious revolutionists in their own right. Meanwhile, the main beneficiaries of the government's "war on poverty" were a thin layer of the black population, many of whom went on to be overseers of the ghettos as big city mayors, police chiefs and in other government offices.

By every index of misery the conditions of life for the black working class and poor are as bad as they were in the 1960s. The reality today is that much of the black population is written off as little more than a "surplus population" by the racist rulers, not worth even providing with subsistence-level welfare and other programs. And of course there are the huge numbers locked up in prisons. This serves to underline, again, that the only road to black freedom lies through shattering the entire system of racist American capitalism. What is necessary is a struggle for *power*, a socialist revolution, by the integrated working class—the wage slaves without whose labor the capitalist owners cannot reap their golden riches—that will overthrow the U.S. imperialist order.

The Fall of the Black Panther Party

Facing a dead end politically, their early victories against cop brutality long behind them, the popular-front alliance with the reformists and liberals going nowhere, the Panthers were broken by bloody state repression and COINTELPRO provocations. These in turn fed into murderous internal factionalism. In 1971 there was a violent and spectacular split centered on the personalities of BPP leaders Eldridge Cleaver and Huey Newton. As seen in the documentary, Cleaver and much of his group were in exile in Algeria where he fled following his 1968 arrest. This wing continued to talk of "urban guerilla warfare," although given the massive state repression against the Panthers this was little more than posturing. The Newton wing moved to Democratic Party liberalism as seen in the footage in *The Black Panthers* of Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown campaigning as Democrats in the 1973 Oakland municipal elections.

James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Mumia Abu-Jamal in 1969 when Minister of Information of Philadelphia Black Panther chapter.

Despite the idealism and heroism of the early Panthers, the split reflected the problems of trying to build a "revolutionary vanguard" based on the glorification of impoverished black youth in the ghettos, seeing the "most oppressed" as the "most revolutionary." Although often courageous, these adventurous youth were not recruited on the basis of a revolutionary political program. As a reflection, discipline in the Panthers was imposed by street-gang methods. In the absence of a membership politically armed through education, discussion, debate and commitment, leadership in the Panthers became a form of "hero worship." The disastrous effect can be seen in the documentary with Huey Newton bathing in adulation following his release from jail. The inherent corruption of the "warrior-hero" leader is captured in scenes of Newton's lavish penthouse apartment, paid for out of party funds raised for Panther defense cases.

WV Photo

Spartacist banner at "Millions March NYC" demonstration against racist police killings, December 2014.

The Panthers' glorification of lumpenism was also seen in their treatment of women members, who by the 1970s made up over half the party's membership. While many of these women were leaders of Panthers' political education classes and some were party leaders, phrases like "pussy power" were thrown around, reflecting the sexual degradation of women in the BPP. This was not simply vulgar talk but came out of the Panthers' lumpenproletarian base and macho quasi-militarism, which made for a brutal internal life, particularly for women.

Nonetheless, from the late 1960s through to the Cleaver-Newton split, the Panthers were so sacrosanct in radical circles and nearly all self-proclaimed Marxist organizations that any criticism of them was met with shrill accusations of racism. In the face of the widespread hero worship of Newton, Cleaver and other Panther leaders, the Spartacist League polemicized against the BPP's notion of lumpen vanguardism and argued that black nationalism, even in its most radical form, was a utopian dead end. We also denounced their physical assaults against other leftists and challenged their rightward plunge into the Democratic Party. At the same time, we fought to defend Panther militants against state repression, and we continue to do so.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

In the end, the Panthers were not defeated politically through the intervention of a Leninist vanguard party, but rather physically and organizationally destroyed by the capitalist state. Thus, many of the lessons of the demise of an organization that represented the high-water mark of black radicalism in the last 50 years of American history have been lost. Our purpose is to arm a new generation of young militants and workers with these lessons, to win them to the program of revolutionary integrationism. That is the understanding that the only road to black freedom lies in the struggle to smash racist, imperialist America through a proletarian socialist revolution, in which black workers, the most combative element in the working class, will play a leading role.

As we concluded our article "End of the Black Power Era," which was written after the Cleaver-Newton split:

> "The Panthers could not defeat the cops because the cops are an essential part of the capitalist state and the Panthers could not defeat that state. Given that fact, the Panthers could only alternate between the bitter consequences of heroic adventurism or appealing to the liberal establishment.
>
> "The oppression of the black people cannot be ended by black activists alone, but only by the working class as a whole. The breakup of the Panthers' organization and authority creates greater opportunity—but only opportunity—for the struggle for an integrated proletarian socialist vanguard party. The process is in no sense inevitable; there will always be plenty of hustlers and romantic rebels to attempt endless repetition of the old mistakes and betrayals. But the intervention of Leninists among radical blacks can stimulate the understanding that the liberation of black people will be both a great driving force of the American proletarian revolution, and a great achievement of the revolution in power. That revolution will be made, not in the name of black power, but of working-class power—communism." ■

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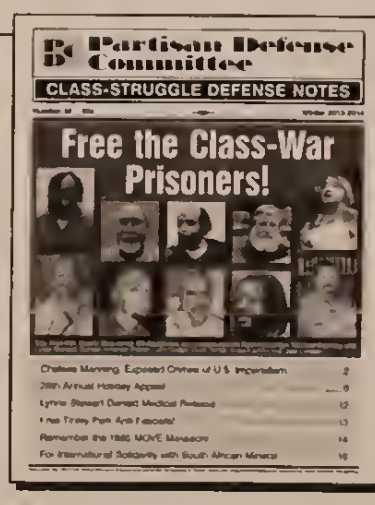

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WORKERS VANGUARD

For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

UAW Tops Push Repackaged Sellout

What part of "no more tiers" does United Auto Workers (UAW) head Dennis Williams not understand? Union members, by a two-to-one margin, rejected the first rotten deal that his team negotiated with Fiat Chrysler (FCA)—the first time UAW workers have voted down a national contract since 1982. Deliberations had been kept hidden from workers, who were rightly furious at the extension of the two-tier wage system even as Williams hailed the proposed contract for its supposed "tremendous gains." Returning to the table for Round Two, the UAW bureaucracy this time set a deadline for a strike and very belatedly began preparations, only to announce an eleventh-hour agreement. In the end, more of the same was served up—the tiers that are so corrosive to the unity and integrity of the union are preserved over the life of the deal. This repackaged sellout deserves to share the fate of the first.

Of course, simply sending the same birds back for a third go-round is highly unlikely to yield anything better. To wrest real gains from FCA, as well as General Motors and Ford, the union will have to draw a line with strike action when the bosses don't budge. Indeed, the mere threat of a strike convinced management to seemingly discover a little extra money it could afford to fork over. But for Williams & Co., who are devoted to maintaining the profitability of the automakers, that threat was intended as theater, not a serious declaration of class battle. Auto workers need a new union leadership, one that will confront the employers from the standpoint of class versus class, not passive acceptance of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The existing union officialdom's connivance with the employers was evident in how they addressed the genuine concerns of their members. Equal pay (and benefits) for equal work means all workers should receive the highest rate, immediately. Instead, the union bureaucrats have hatched an eight-year phase-in scheme to close the enormous wage gap. Conveniently for FCA, much of this wage hike is to take place, if at all, *after* the 2019 expiration of the proposed contract. In other words, it

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The Black Panthers
Movie Review

By M.J. Clancy

With its powerful archival footage and interviews with former Black Panther Party members, Stanley Nelson's documentary *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* reopens a chapter of black history that has long been distorted, hated and feared by the racist rulers of America. While the capitalist ruling class has embraced Martin Luther King as the prophet of "nonviolence" and "patient moderation," the Panthers have long been demonized as little more than thugs. Even amidst the outpouring of protests against racist cop terror, there has been little reference to the Panthers who courageously championed the defense of the ghetto masses against police brutality. Instead, the call has been to "reclaim MLK" as some kind of radical opponent of American capitalism.

Stephen Shames

Black Panthers at rally to free Huey Newton in West Oakland, July 1968.

To some extent, such mythology is also shared by Nelson. His documentary gives the impression that the Panthers were a kind of Northern offshoot of the civil rights movement and that it was only following King's assassination in 1968 that they came to despair of his "turn the other cheek" liberal pacifism. On the contrary, the Black Panther Party was founded as a direct response to the ***failure*** of the civil rights movement, embodied in MLK's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to make any serious dent into the bedrock of black oppression when it moved North in the mid 1960s.

Here, the political premises of the King leadership—which looked to the federal government and the Democratic Party for legislative redress—collided with economic and social reality. Black people in the Northern ghettos had lived with "equality under the law" for years while being segregated in the rotting tenements of the inner cities, relegated to the worst, lowest-paying jobs and daily humiliated and brutalized by the police. It became abundantly clear that King had no program to fight the causes of racial oppression, which is rooted in the economic and social structure of capitalist America.

A movement that had raised great hopes and activated tens of thousands in often-heroic battles collapsed amidst the ghetto uprisings that began in Harlem in 1964 and continued with undiminished intensity through Watts in 1965 and Newark, Cleveland and Detroit in 1967. In the middle of these upheavals, the Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. They sought to strip away the deeply felt sense of powerlessness of the black inner city residents, particularly in relation to racist cops gunning down blacks on the streets.

Images of Malcolm X and his call for the right of self-defense "by any means necessary," fill the screen at the beginning of the documentary. But it gives little idea of the impact of his uncompromising opposition to the capitalist rulers of America, Democrats as well as Republicans. Malcolm sparked hatred and fear in those rulers and inspired black militants. The Panthers were established just two years after *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was first published. In his book *This Side of Glory* (1993), former Panther leader David Hilliard recalled a conversation in which Newton announced that he was about to found a new organization that will be "the personification of Malcolm X's dreams."

The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution shows footage of BPP patrols in Oakland, armed with guns and law books, surrounding a gang of white cops terrorizing a black "suspect." For boldly asserting their constitutional right to bear arms and challenging racist cop terror, the Panthers gained the respect of the ghetto masses and began drawing many black youth into their ranks, first in Oakland and then nationwide. At its height, the BPP had 4,000 members and 35 chapters. As one former Panther says in the documentary: "We were not after the church folks; we were not after the Muslim folks. We wanted the brother on the corner, the brother who is getting his head banged in every weekend by the police."

Other former Panthers recall the problems of trying to assemble a "vanguard of the revolution" from unemployed black youth. The BPP made its stand on purging the ghetto of police brutality. This was equivalent to calling to overthrow the armed might of the capitalist state, a perspective that could and can only be realized by the mobilization of the multiracial working class under the leadership of a genuine vanguard party. Despite the radicalism and personal courage of its militants, the BPP shared the predominantly white, student-centered New Left's rejection of the centrality and strategic social power of the working class in the struggle against racial oppression and class exploitation.

As we wrote in 1972:

> "To avoid the Marxist contention that the organized working class is the key revolutionary element, the Panthers came up with the theory that black lumpens are the revolutionary vanguard, and that all employed workers, black and white, have been bought off by the ruling class. The Panthers' 'theory' of lumpenism is a mixture of self-aggrandizement and impressionism....
>
> "A political movement which isolates itself in a social milieu hostile to normal work-a-day society must become irresponsible, individualistic and ultimately cynical and contemptuous of the mass of working people. It is precisely that task of revolutionaries to penetrate the mainstream of social and economic life and explode 'normal work-a-day' society on the basis of its terrible oppressiveness—the very oppressiveness which drove individuals to become revolutionaries in the first place."
>
> —"End of the Black Power Era," reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism" (September 1978)

The Panthers had members working in factories near Oakland and even put out a few issues of a plant newspaper at the Fremont GM plant. Unionized white workers on strike at an oil refinery in Richmond, California, took up the BPP's cry of "pig" against strikebreaking cops who were attacking their picket lines. Thus, the idea of linking the anger of the ghetto masses to the power of labor was not some kind of utopian pipedream. The Spartacist League sought to win young black militants around the Panthers to a Marxist perspective and to the struggle to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Fighting in the unions as well as among radicalizing youth, such militants could have been instrumental in breaking the brittle stranglehold of the racist,

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1077

30 October 2015

Israel Out of East Jerusalem, West Bank!

AFP

October 8: Heavily armed Israeli soldiers confront desperate Palestinian protesters in West Bank village of Tuqua.

Defend the Palestinians!

Over the past several weeks, Israel's murderous military apparatus and its armed settler auxiliaries have killed at least 60 Palestinians—many of them teenagers—and wounded some 2,000. The Zionist overlords have unleashed an intensified crackdown in the Occupied Territories—imposing more checkpoints, placing Palestinian neighborhoods on lockdown, dispatching thousands more soldiers and police and inciting lynch mobs in the streets. Such routine tactics are aimed at terrorizing and demoralizing the already besieged Palestinian population. Expressing the sense of utter isolation and imprisonment among the 4.8 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, one 25-year-old student from Jenin remarked, "We must get out of this situation—even if it costs us everything."

The latest onslaught was prepared when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved to restrict Palestinian access to East Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest site in the Muslim world and a religious and cultural gathering space for Palestinians in the city. Seizing on a handful of atomized attacks by Palestinian assailants armed with knives and screwdrivers, the Israeli government sealed off the 300,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem with concrete walls, demolished homes and revoked residency status for the families of alleged Palestinian attackers—essentially, as one commentator for the 972mag.com newsletter noted, "carving up and crushing the Palestinian expanse without any consideration for everyday life or for a possible future compromise."

This is Netanyahu's response to those who retain any remnant of hope that even the most constricted and peripheral sliver of East Jerusalem will ever be the capital of an "independent" Palestine. Since its conquest and annexation in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Jewish settlers have flooded into East Jerusalem and taken over more and more of the city from its original Palestinian residents, who are not even nominal citizens of Israel. This history of evictions has been repeatedly punctuated by acts of Zionist state and ultrarightist Jewish terror, aimed particularly at Al Aqsa (which is part of the complex that Israelis call the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism). Within months of first becoming prime minister in 1996, Netanyahu presided at the opening of a tunnel under the mosque, inciting a bloodbath in which 62 Palestinians were slaughtered. Four years later, the supposedly more liberal regime of Ehud Barak provided an armed escort for notorious racist butcher Ariel Sharon as he staged a provocative visit to the Al Aqsa compound, which helped spark the second Palestinian *intifada* (uprising). Now many are speculating about a "third *intifada*."

Reuters

Wounded Palestinians arrested by Israeli soldiers near Jewish settlement of Bet El, in the Occupied Territories near Ramallah, October 7.

The first *intifada*, launched in late 1987, was a deepgoing and popular organized rising by Palestinian youth who were fed up with decades of vacuous United Nations resolutions, cynical promises of Arab "solidarity" and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership's passivity in the face of Zionist expansion. Yet despite several years of valorous and self-sacrificing struggle, the oppressed Palestinian masses ended up with only the miserable Oslo "peace" accords of 1993. Oslo gave birth to the PLO-controlled Palestinian Authority, a national "leadership" tasked with policing its own people on behalf of the Israeli occupiers, thus acting as subcontractors for the Zionist state.

In the intervening years, the ghetto walls have grown insurmountable and the Palestinian people have been driven ever deeper into misery and national humiliation. Well over half of the West Bank has been confiscated from Palestinians or closed off to them, and 80 percent of the population of Gaza is dependent on humanitarian aid for its survival. Under the pretext of curbing Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist rulers of Gaza who accrued authority as a result of the PLO's betrayals, Israel has repeatedly launched devastating attacks on the tiny Gaza Strip. Last year, nearly 2,200 largely defenseless Palestinians were slaughtered and 10,000 wounded. Gaza today is little more than a large detention camp with around 100,000 homeless residents, demolished buildings and wrecked infrastructure, all surrounded by an electrified fence.

The recent suicidal "lone wolf" stabbings are a reflection of the intense despair and frustration felt by the current generation of Palestinians. Some of the recent attacks by Palestinians have targeted Zionist agents of the occupying force: soldiers, police and their settler auxiliaries. But the indiscriminate killings of Israeli civilians are, from the standpoint of the proletariat, criminal acts of terror. Moreover, the stabbing attacks serve only to provide a further pretext for murderous Zionist repression. Such attacks reinforce the hunker state mentality that binds Israeli Jewish working people to their own exploiters and thus set back the cause of Palestinian emancipation.

The only salvation for the Palestinian people lies in the Marxist road of proletarian internationalism: the fight for workers revolutions and a socialist federation of the Near East in which Palestinian Arabs, Israeli Jews and all the other peoples of the region will find national and social justice. So long as the struggle remains on nationalist or religious terrain, the Palestinians can only lose out to the more technologically advanced Zionist state, which

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Greece: For Workers Struggle Against Austerity!...6

"Karl Marx" by V.I. Lenin

We print below the fifth installment of "Karl Marx" by Lenin. The first four segments of this series, which described Marx's philosophical and economic doctrines, were published in WV *Nos. 1073-1076 (4 and 18 September and 2 and 16 October). This selection outlines the necessary replacement of capitalism by socialist society and the subsequent withering away of the state.*

PART FIVE

Socialism

From the foregoing it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society into socialist society wholly and exclusively from the economic law of the development of contemporary society. The socialisation of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms and has manifested itself very strikingly, during the half-century since the death of Marx, in the growth of large-scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of finance capital, provides the principal material foundation for the inevitable advent of socialism. The intellectual and moral motive force and the physical executor of this transformation is the proletariat, which has been trained by capitalism itself. The proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie, which finds expression in a variety of forms ever richer in content, inevitably becomes a political struggle directed towards the conquest of political power by the proletariat ("the dictatorship of the proletariat"). The socialisation of production cannot but lead to the means of production becoming the property of society, to the "expropriation of the expropriators." A tremendous rise in labour productivity, a shorter working day, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins, of small-scale, primitive and disunited production by collective and improved labour—such are the direct consequences of this transformation. Capitalism breaks for all time the ties between agriculture and industry, but at the same time, through its highest development, it prepares new elements of those ties, a union between industry and agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the concentration of collective labour, and on a redistribution of the human population (thus putting an end both to rural backwardness, isolation and barbarism, and to the unnatural concentration of vast masses of people in big cities). A new form of family, new conditions in the status of women and in the upbringing of the younger gener-

V. Deni and M. Cheremnykh

1920 Soviet poster shows Lenin sweeping away kings, priests and capitalists.

ation are prepared by the highest forms of present-day capitalism: the labour of women and children and the break-up of the patriarchal family by capitalism inevitably assume the most terrible, disastrous, and repulsive forms in modern society. Nevertheless, "modern industry, by assigning as it does, an important part in the socially organised process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes. It is, of course, just as absurd to hold the Teutonic-Christian form of the family to be absolute and final as it would be to apply that character to the ancient Roman, the ancient Greek, or the Eastern forms which, moreover, taken together form a series in historic development. Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the labourer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the labourer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery" (*Capital*, Vol. 1, end of Chap. 13). The factory system contains "the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of social production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings" (*ibid.*). Marx's socialism places the problems of nationality and of the state on the same historical footing, not only in the sense of explaining the past but also in the sense of a bold forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement. Nations are an inevitable product, an inevitable form, in the bourgeois epoch of social development. The working class could not grow strong, become mature and take shape without "constituting itself within the nation," without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). The development of capitalism, however, breaks down national barriers more and more, does away with national seclusion, and substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true of the developed capitalist countries that "the workingmen have no country" and that "united action" by the workers, of the civilised countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat" (*Communist Manifesto*). The state, which is organised coercion, inevitably came into being at a definite stage in the development of society, when the latter had split into irreconcilable classes, and could not exist without an "authority" ostensibly standing above society, and to a certain degree separate from society. Arising out of class contradictions, the state becomes "...the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave-owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a work in which the writer expounds his own views and Marx's). Even the democratic republic, the freest and most progressive form of the bourgeois state, does not eliminate this fact in any way, but merely modifies its form (the links between the government and the stock exchange, the corruption—direct and indirect—of officialdom and the press, etc.). By leading to the abolition of classes, socialism will thereby lead to the abolition of the state as well. "The first act," Engels writes in *Anti-Dühring*, "by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. The state interference in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and by the direction of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished,' it withers away." "The society that will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*).

Finally, as regards the attitude of Marx's socialism towards the small peasantry, which will continue to exist in the period of the expropriation of the expropriators, we must refer to a declaration made by Engels, which expresses Marx's views: "...when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today" (Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, p. 17, published by Alexeyeva; there are errors in the Russian translation. Original in *Die Neue Zeit*).

[COMING UP NEXT: TACTICS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT]

W.E. Debenham

Marx's close collaborator Friedrich Engels put forward materialist conception of history and development of the state as instrument of class repression in his classic works *Anti-Dühring*, written in consultation with Marx, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1077 **30 October 2015**

Myriam (Fetneh) Benoît

Family of Myriam Benoît

1949–2015

On October 15, our comrade Myriam Benoît died of cancer. She was a leading cadre of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, the French section of the International Communist League, for more than three decades. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her comrades and friends around the world, as well as to her children and grandchildren, her brothers Ahdi and Sadegh and their families. Myriam was particularly close to her sister-in-law Mojgan, whom Myriam described as "the most incredible person that I've ever known in my life."

Myriam was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1949 into an urban, atheistic and aristocratic Persian family. She was a born rebel, but also the product of her time and her familial circumstances. Her secular family revered women; during her childhood she was pampered by attentive servants brought to the city from her family's landed estate. She received a bilingual (French-Persian) education at Tehran's elite Jeanne d'Arc School. She married a Kurdish man, socially taboo in a country where the Persian Shi'ite ruling class lords it over a slew of oppressed minorities, including Kurds, Azeris and Baluchis. Her subsequent divorce was considered a scandal and kindled her later commitment to the fight against women's oppression. After obtaining a degree in social work from the University of Tehran, she moved to the south of the country, where the abject rural poverty moved her tremendously and influenced her subsequent politicization.

In 1978 she moved to France, as turbulent struggles rocked Iran. A massive revolt among students and strikes by workers encouraged reactionary Shi'ite mullahs aligned behind the Ayatollah Khomeini to challenge the repressive regime of the U.S.- and British-installed Shah of Iran. Myriam had been around a Maoist group in Iran. But she was repulsed by leftists who embraced Khomeini and who adopted the veil as a supposed symbol of rebellion. She was drawn to the LTF by the call of the international Spartacist tendency (predecessor of the ICL): "Down with the Shah! No support to the Mullahs!" and our slogan "No to the Veil!" Myriam was active in translating our propaganda into Farsi. In 2001, she toured our European sections, giving a powerful presentation on "Iran 1979: Proletarian Revolution or Islamic Reaction" that was later printed in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 784, 12 July 2002).

Myriam was invited to attend our founding international conference in late summer 1979 and joined the LTF shortly thereafter. Around that time, Khomeini came to power in Iran and began slaughtering his leftist supporters. Khomeini's rise had spurred a rebellion by U.S.-backed Islamic reactionaries in neighboring Afghanistan, where tribal-based fundamentalists fought the Soviet-backed, modernizing nationalist PDPA government, which had implemented land reform, lowered the bride price and introduced compulsory education for girls. Myriam had been sympathetic to the Soviet Union in her youth, and our military side with the PDPA regime in Afghanistan was part of what impelled her into membership. Impressed by the history of the Bolsheviks, who led the 1917 Russian Revolution and fought to liberate women and the peoples of the East, she was passionate about our January 1980 call, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan," which we raised as Soviet troops entered the country in support of the nationalist regime.

Tremendously energetic until the very end, Myriam worked on a memoir as her health deteriorated. She fondly recalled the work that our comrade Susan Adams did to educate and train her, noting: "Understanding that you are a cadre is important, without false modesty, because it confers on you a responsibility. If you don't take responsibility, you are not a cadre." While still a relatively new member, Myriam became organizer of the LTF's Rouen local and later helped set up an organizing committee in Lyon. In 1985 she became a full member of the LTF Central Committee. She was an effective and exuberant activist and spokesman for the LTF and recruited numerous young people. In April 1989, after the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan, the Partisan Defense Committee undertook an international fundraising campaign around the slogans "No to the Veil—Defend Afghan Women! Support Jalalahad Victims of CIA's Cutthroats!" Myriam recalled the phenomenal support, even from veiled women, our efforts received at a local immigrant market in Lyon.

Shortly thereafter, when the Berlin Wall fell, the ICL threw all our resources into the fight to defend the East German deformed workers state and the fight for proletarian political revolution. Some leading LTF cadres had a limp response to these events, but Myriam fought for the intervention, traveling to Germany in 1990 to assist with the campaign. In 1992, after the LTF leadership imploded, Myriam was unique in being willing to come forward to help lead the section and was brought onto the International Executive Committee as a consultative member.

Myriam played an important role intervening into the huge defensive strike wave of public-sector workers that rocked France in December 1995. She strove to improve her English and in 1996-97 worked with our British section. In the 1990s and 2000s, she was a central public spokesman for the LTF's legal defense organization, Comité de Défense Sociale, which campaigned in support of American class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal; she played a key role in getting broader elements of the French workers movement, including the French Communist Party, to take up Mumia's case. Myriam also frequently intervened in key public meetings of other left groups in Paris to skewer their opportunism.

In more recent years, Myriam was instrumental in helping our Canadian section intervene into the student strikes that rocked Quebec beginning in the spring of 2012. She helped to recruit young comrades in Montreal and to build and consolidate our Montreal local, an important extension for our international into French-speaking Canada. A Canadian comrade described Myriam's important contributions: how she marched in the massive demos and argued with people we met, noting that she "in pretty much every way shaped this work." A young cadre in Montreal wrote to her: "We are better communists thanks to your work." When the local advertised her campus forum "Marxism or Feminism: For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!" the feminist student bureaucrats tried to censor us. The successful forum, which Myriam gave despite the stir on campus, provoked lively debate (see "UQAM Feminists Fail to Gag Marxists," *Spartacist Canada* No. 183, Winter 2014-15, reprinted in *WV* No. 1062, 20 February). Myriam did much of this between chemotherapy sessions, which she was undergoing in France.

Myriam had an irrepressible zest for life. As a comrade close to her remarked recently, she didn't live by politics alone. Although lacking formal training, Myriam was an accomplished singer, often moving friends and comrades to joyous dance, or mournful tears. Late in life she learned to read music. She successfully auditioned for the prestigious Bahar Chorale, a UNESCO project, which she performed with. She also gave theater performances, wrote a play and translated various works from Farsi into French. The latter included a book of poems titled *Travail au Noir* [*Illegal Work*] (l'Harmattan, 2015) by Mehrdad Arefani, a secular Iranian poet and former political prisoner now in exile. Myriam deeply appreciated her doctors, nurses and medical staff, actively discussing politics with them and selling them subscriptions to the LTF's press. Myriam was a force to be reckoned with and will be sorely missed.

For those who wish to join Myriam's comrades, friends and family to celebrate her life, a memorial meeting will be held in Paris on Saturday, November 14. Please contact the LTF at 011-33-1-42-08-01-49 for more information.

Poster for September 2014 forum given by Myriam in Montreal.

Le Bolchévik

Myriam addressing rally to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Paris, March 2008.

Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!

Castro Regime Welcomes Reactionary Vatican

At least 100,000 Cubans converged on Havana's Plaza de la Revolución on September 20 for a Catholic mass led by Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina (Pope Francis). One side of this giant square features a huge portrait of Che Guevara, the hero of the Cuban Revolution who was murdered with the aid of the CIA in Bolivia in 1967. On another side, a large poster had been erected depicting Jesus with the words "Vengan a mí" ("Come to me"). Raúl Castro, leader of the ruling Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), sat in the front row and attended other papal masses in the cities of Holguín and Santiago over the following days. The Pope also had a half-hour meeting with Raúl's brother and predecessor, the 89-year-old Fidel, which a Vatican spokesman described as "very informal and friendly."

Voice of America, the CIA's media mouthpiece, saluted Francis for warning the Cuban people against "the dangers of ideology" (voanews.com, 20 September). For its part, the Communist Party leadership urged Cubans to attend the papal masses and had them broadcast live on state TV. Posters with the Pope's face were displayed all over the country. In a welcoming address at Havana's airport, Raúl Castro lauded Francis for playing a key role in the negotiations that led to the restoration of U.S.-Cuban diplomatic relations; he also presented him with the gift of a giant crucifix. During a visit to the Vatican earlier in the year, the PCC leader even told a press conference, "If the pope continues this way, I will go back to praying and go back to the church, and I'm not joking" (*Washington Post*, 10 May).

The Cuban leaders' welcome to Pope Francis—building on their earlier fêting of his predecessors John Paul II and Benedict XVI when they visited the island—is criminal and deadly dangerous. The Catholic church is, and has always been, a bastion of social and political reaction worldwide, not least in Latin America. The Vatican will use any authority it gains among the Cuban population to promote counterrevolution under a cloak of "democracy." The return of capitalist exploitation to Cuba would signal the destruction of the country's revolutionary gains and herald renewed U.S. neocolonial domination.

Sipa

September 20: Pope Francis at Havana's Plaza de la Revolución.

Cuban Deformed Workers State in Peril

Cuba is the only workers state in the Americas. The smashing of capitalist rule and the socialization of the economy more than 50 years ago led to impressive advances for the Cuban people. Free quality health care and education became available to all. Women were fully integrated into the workforce, and today they hold more than half of all positions in university faculties. Cuban doctors are regularly dispatched around the world to aid the victims of disasters and epidemics. Despite continuing material scarcity, Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and a lower infant mortality rate than the U.S. or the European Union.

The American imperialists have worked relentlessly to overturn the Cuban Revolution. Their crimes have ranged from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion to numerous assassination attempts on Fidel Castro; from promoting the counterrevolutionary *gusano* terror gangs in Miami to enforcing a decades-long starvation embargo. The workers of the world, especially in the United States, must stand for Cuba's unconditional military defense against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution.

But from the start, the workers state has been deformed by the rule of a nationalist bureaucracy that is hostile to the perspective of international socialist revolution. Following in the footsteps of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union, the Castro bureaucracy, upholding the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," has pursued the pipe dream of "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists. To this end, it has repeatedly undermined revolutionary opportunities elsewhere in Latin America.

For example, the PCC bureaucrats admonished the left-nationalist Nicaraguan Sandinistas in the 1980s not to follow the "Cuban road" of expropriating the capitalist class. Time and again, they have promoted bourgeois-nationalist regimes, from the Velasco dictatorship in Peru in the 1960s and early '70s to the Brazilian, Venezuelan and other capitalist governments today. The Cuban Stalinists' gross accommodation of the Vatican is part of this picture. Defense of the Cuban Revolution is directly linked to the struggle for a workers political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and establish a regime based on revolutionary internationalism and workers democracy. This requires forging a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to mobilize the working people in struggle.

Socialism means a society of material abundance based on a level of economic productivity higher than that possible under capitalism. Such a society, requiring the most modern technology and an international division of labor, cannot be constructed in a single country, especially a small island with meager natural resources. Rather, its construction will require a series of socialist revolutions internationally, not least in the advanced capitalist countries. The survival of the Cuban workers state ultimately depends on extension of the revolution, especially to the U.S. imperialist behemoth.

When Fidel Castro's petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces marched into Havana in January 1959, the army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the corrupt, U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship shattered. Initially, the new regime had no intention of expropriating the domestic capitalist class or the vast U.S. imperialist holdings. But faced with economic looting by Batista's cronies and unremitting hostility from the rulers in Washington, the government was compelled to carry through sweeping nationalizations of the American-owned sugar plantations, banks and other firms in the summer and fall of 1960, consolidating a deformed workers state.

AP

Crazed Cuban reactionaries in downtown Miami pray for success of CIA's Bay of Pigs invasion, 19 April 1961. God didn't answer.

In its early years, the regime was rightly hostile to the Catholic hierarchy. Fidel Castro denounced the leaders of the church in Cuba as "peons of the American embassy" and "Franco Fascists." His rage was aroused by a pastoral letter issued by the Cuban Catholic hierarchy condemning "the growing advance of Communism in our country" (*Time*, 22 August 1960). Church properties were expropriated, including more than 300 schools previously restricted to the elite that were turned into public schools under state control. Religious statues were symbolically decapitated.

The creation of a workers state and the economic and social advances that followed were only possible because of the existence of the Soviet Union and its alliance with Cuba. The Soviets provided essential military protection against U.S. imperialism and subsidized Cuba with up to $5 billion of aid annually. The USSR provided some 60 percent of Cuba's food and nearly all of its oil, in exchange for sugar. These subsidies were severely curtailed with the unraveling of Stalinist rule in the USSR in the late 1980s, and the counterrevolutionary destruction in 1989-92 of the deformed workers states of East Europe and of the Soviet Union ended them altogether. Cuba suffered a deep economic crisis known as the "Special Period." Starting in 1993, the Castroite regime implemented a series of market-oriented policies that, while eventually producing some economic recovery, led to a significant increase in inequality.

The same period saw a growing reconciliation between the regime and the church hierarchy. The constitution was amended in the early 1990s to describe Cuba as a "secular" state (replacing "atheist"), and the party leaders declared that atheism was no longer a prerequisite for party membership. Christmas and, more recently, Good Friday were declared national holidays. Still, active religious practice on the island remains limited. While some 40 percent of Cubans have been baptized, very few attend Sunday mass; those who do are mainly elderly. Among black Cubans, the rituals and mystical beliefs of Santería, which derive from the traditions of African slaves brought to Cuba by the Spanish colonists, are significantly more common.

The social role of the Catholic church has nonetheless grown dramatically, with the government's tacit approval. Charities and cultural centers financed by the church have become prominent. Amid limited access to basic goods, outfits like Caritas and the Jesuit Loyola Center act as distribution centers for food, diapers and other sanitary products as well as aid for the elderly, while also providing childcare facilities, access to computers, etc. These charities are financed by right-wing Cuban exiles, as are a number of business schools that collaborate with the Catholic University in Spain to train so-called entrepreneurs and organize discussions on Cuba's economic future.

In 2010, a new seminary began operating on the outskirts of Havana. Earlier this year, Catholic officials stated that

Hands Off Arrested Air France Strikers!

No Layoffs!

We print below a translation of an October 14 statement protesting the arrest of Air France workers, issued hy the Comité de Défense Sociale. Thc arrests were made a week after two managers had their shirts torn off during a strike rally at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. The CDDS is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Ligue Trotskyste de France, French section of the International Communist League.

Eleven morc Air France workers have subsequently been slapped with bogus defacemcnt of property charges. Seventeen have been vindictively suspended without pay. On October 22, at least 5,000 workers and their supporters demonstrated outside the French parliament against this outrageous prosecution.

* * *

The Comité de Défense Sociale condemns the arrest and charging of five Air France employees. We also protest the disciplinary procedures currently targeting around two dozen workers following the 5 October 2015 demonstration.

On that day, thousands of Air France workers from all job categories protested against the threat of nearly 3,000 layoffs, which would be on top of 9,000 jobs already axed since 2012. The violence of the proposed cuts was matched by the Air France bosses' contemptuous arrogance toward the workers who entered the room where the hoard meeting was scheduled. After infuriating the workers, the managers fled. The sight of the two bosses, shirtless, making a run for it was welcomed by not only the thousands of demonstrators who witnessed the scene, hut also by millions of workers around the world who saw the pictures.

Reuters

AFP

October 5: Striking Air France workers protest in front of corporate headquarters at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. Above: Shirtless Air France executive Xavier Broseta clambers over fence after angering workers.

Five workers from the cargo and maintenance divisions were arrested at their homes on Monday, October 12, at 6 a.m. and subjected to 30 hours in police custody, a spectacle that the government seeks to normalize with its racist "war against terrorism." The workers are scheduled to appear before the court in Bobigny [a suburb of Paris] on Decemher 2, charged with "gang assault," and they face up to three years in prison and fines of 45,000 euros [$50,000]. Even the government's media mouthpiece (*Le Monde*, 15 October) admits that the shirts could have been torn off hy security guards during the crush. This did not prevent Prime Minister Manuel Valls from treating the protesters as "thugs." As Miguel Fortea, the general secretary of the CGT Air France union, stated: "They are trying to criminalize trade-union action and the workers"—whose dignity and livelihoods they want to rip up.

Later on October 5, there were victims of violence that deserves condemnation: a flight attendant and a pilot were beaten and injured by police during a demonstration at the airport terminal. But it is the Air France Five who face serious consequences for simply having dared to protest at a trade-union action against threatened layoffs! These criminal proceedings target the entire workers movement, which must be mobilized against the attacks by the Air France bosses and their government. Twelve trade unions at Air France have called to demonstrate on October 22. Like them, we demand: *Drap all charges, withaut canditians, against the Air France Five! Stap the disciplinary proceedings against the Five and their co-warkers naw!* ■

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requests to build new churches, which had long awaited government approval, began to get the green light. The growing reach of the Catholic church has been furthered by changes to U.S. Treasury Department regulations that allow travel to Cuba by Americans for the purpose of engaging in religious activities. With increased funding, the church has been able to build networks of support that could play a role in organizing future counterrevolutionary activities.

Apostles of Clerical Reaction

The role of the Vatican in fomenting counterrevolution is shown clearly by John Paul II, the first Pope invited to Cuba by the Castro regime, in 1998. That Pope, born Karol Wojtyla, played a key ideological role in the creation of the pro-capitalist Solidarność "trade union" in his native Poland in 1980.

Decades of economic mismanagement, nationalism and capitulation to the Catholic church by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy had driven much of Poland's historically socialist-minded working class into the arms of clerical reaction. The church was effectively the only legal opposition to the bureaucracy. Having consolidated around a counterrevolutionary program including the call for "free elections" and "free trade unions"—standard Cold War cries of the CIA and its AFL-CIO anti-Communist cohorts—Solidarność made a bid for power in the fall of 1981. When the Stalinists moved to suppress Solidarność in December 1981, we supported the suppression of the counterrevolutionaries. At the same time, we emphasized that the growth of Catholic reaction was a direct consequence of the political bankruptcy of the bureaucratic ruling caste.

Less than a decade later, the Polish Stalinists abdicated and Solidarność came to power, signaling the destruction of the Polish deformed workers state. These events helped pave the way for similar developments elsewhere in East Europe and for the destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92—a devastating defeat for the working class internationally, including in Cuba.

AP

Pope John Paul II gives communion to Lech Walesa, leader of pro-capitalist Solidarność, in Gdansk, Poland, June 1987.

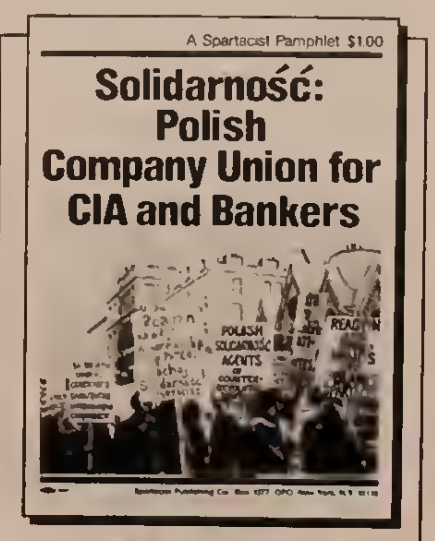
The current Pope, the first from Latin America, has sought to carve out a progressive image through his homilies on behalf of the poor and oppressed. But, fawning statements by the PCC bureaucrats to the contrary, the face behind Francis' mask is deeply reactionary. In his youth, Jorge Bergoglio was a member of Argentina's right-wing, clericalist Iron Guard. He was part of the Catholic hierarchy there in the 1970s and early '80s, when the church shored up the military junta of General Jorge Videla. The generals' bloodsoaked regime, which was backed to the hilt by U.S. imperialism, killed or "disappeared" at least 30,000 workers and leftists. A bishop or a cardinal was present at every puhlic event or national holiday to bless the dictators.

Part of the context for the Cuban bureaucrats' increasingly close relations with the Vatican is the latter's diplomatic efforts to end Washington's 55-year economic embargo. We have always opposed the embargo, whose purpose is to strangle the Cuban economy. At the same time, we warn that the campaign by growing sections of the U.S. capitalist class (and now the Obama administration) to end, or at least relax, these starvation measures poses a different kind of danger to the Cuban Revolution.

In contrast to the embargo, capitalists in Europe (notably Spain), and also Canada, have long heen trading with Cuba, believing that Washington's belligerent policies have proven ineffective in undermining the workers state. The imperialist opponents of the embargo aim to undercut Cuba's socialized economy and foment counterrevolution through different means, e.g., flooding the country with cheap imports. Cuba should of course have the right to trade and have diplomatic relations with all countries, including the United States. However, it is vital to maintain the state monopoly of foreign trade, i.e., strict government control of imports and exports.

Religious ideas flourish particularly in the fertile ground of material scarcity, offering solace, glorifying sacrifice and promising reward when you are dead. The Catholic church, once a bastion of feudal reaction, today promotes obedience to the exploitative capitalist order ("Blessed are you who are poor") and foments reactionary anti-woman and anti-gay bigotry. Take the example of abortion rights. Cuba is the only country in the Americas where abortion has been legal and available for free since the late 1960s, a clear example of the gains that are possible once the shackles of capitalism have been broken. Pope Francis and the rest of the Catholic hierarchy want to ban not only abortion but also all forms of contraception. Unrestricted access to such services is essential for women to exercise control over whether and when they will have children; without it, they will again be driven from the workforce and back into the reactionary confines of the family.

Today, the Cuban Revolution stands at a crossroads. Workers in the U.S. have a special duty to defend Cuha against capitalist restoration and rapacious American imperialism. This task is linked inextricably to the fight for socialist revolution to sweep away the U.S. capitalist rulers. The Spartacist Leaguc, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is dedicated to building the Leninist vanguard party needed to lead that struggle to victory. ■



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Greece: For Workers Struggle Against Austerity!

We print below a presentation, edited for publication, given by Spartacist League spokesman Diana Coleman at an October 10 forum in Oakland, California.

PART ONE

Reuters (inset); AP

Athens, October 16: Workers from KKE-affiliated PAME trade-union federation protest Greek parliamentary vote for new austerity measures. Inset: Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (left) meeting with EU heavyweights to agree on more austerity, July 12.

Greece is in an economic and political crisis triggered by the global financial meltdown of 2007-08. Hunger and poverty stalk the streets, from Athens to the rural villages. The working people are being bled white to pay for the crimes of the capitalist class. That's true everywhere, but in weak, dependent Greece, this crisis has hit with a ferocity that is breathtaking.

Since 2010, the European Union (EU) and the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund have imposed draconian austerity measures on Greece in exchange for a series of so-called "rescue packages." But those "rescued" have not been the Greek people, but Greek and especially international banks! The imperialist-dominated EU is an unstable consortium of capitalist countries that works to increase profits by squeezing the workers throughout Europe. It also enables the imperialist powers of Europe, led by Germany, to further subordinate poorer states like Greece, not least through the instrument of the common euro currency. We say: *Down with the EU and the euro!*

The capitalist parties, including Syriza and the new, left split from it known as Popular Unity, have nothing to offer except more austerity. We have opposed voting for any of them! The only way forward is for the proletariat to struggle in its own interests and those of all of the oppressed, independently of and in opposition to the capitalist rulers and all their agents.

In July, the Syriza-led capitalist government trampled on the results of a referendum that rejected the latest EU demands for austerity and agreed to even harsher terms with the imperialists. The ever-worsening economic crisis and the growing menace of fascism pose the vital need to unite the toiling masses against the attacks of the imperialists, the Greek bourgeoisie and the Syriza government. To this end, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece issued a call to the broadest layers of the workers movement to form workers action committees.

Such struggle must go beyond the bourgeois electoral circus and point toward the need for a revolutionary proletarian solution to the crisis. We say that the only way out of the nightmare of recurrent capitalist crisis is to unite the workers throughout Europe in struggle to sweep away the capitalist rulers through socialist revolutions that expropriate the exploiters. For a Socialist United States of Europe! For international proletarian revolution! That's the summary of my talk, but I'm going to explain some of the concepts behind these points, so don't leave just yet.

Here in the U.S., we are once again in presidential election season. Fake-socialist organizations continue to flit around the capitalist Democratic Party like moths around a flame. The reformists are debating whether it is best to pressure the Democrats from the outside *or* to support them explicitly, via the candidacy of purported "socialist" Bernie Sanders, who is running in the Democratic primary (and who has supported nearly every war waged by U.S. imperialism in recent memory). Socialist Alternative is working in his primary campaign, while the International Socialist Organization is trying to pressure him from the outside to become "a genuine independent alternative," that is, to act as a Democrat without the formal affiliation, as he has done for nearly 25 years in Congress.

It's an old story: In the shell game of American politics, the Democratic Party is portrayed as the "friend" of black people and labor. In reality, such illusions in this "lesser evil" bourgeois party have been essential to preserving the rule of racist American capitalism. The building of a revolutionary workers party in the U.S. will only proceed in sharp opposition to the Democrats, the trade-union misleaders who preach reliance on these representatives of the class enemy and their left hangers-on.

Looking to putatively progressive parties that are in fact committed to the capitalist system is a disastrous road for working people everywhere. In Greece, much of the reformist left has spent the past few years hailing or tailing Syriza, the supposedly anti-austerity party that was elected in January to run the government. Today, Syriza is enforcing the vicious austerity attacks ordered by the EU rulers.

Before I get into the current political situation in Greece, I want to talk about the country itself. In 2005, the first time I visited, I was quite surprised by Greece. I had expected it would look like the advanced industrialized countries of West Europe. It did not. Although Athens had a nice subway system that someone from Los Angeles, like me, could certainly admire, the rest of the country was rural and underdeveloped. And it has a small population. During a chat with a Greek comrade, she asked me how many people lived in the greater L.A. area. When I replied, "Oh, about ten or eleven million," she laughed and told me that was the population of Greece. Both of us were kind of startled by this fact. And almost half of that eleven million lives in Athens, with the remainder spread out over the rest of the country.

So it's a small country with a small, but combative, working class. And with the current deindustrialization of the country, the working class is getting smaller. There is some shipbuilding, shipping and longshore work as well as mass transit (the Athens subways), but most of the industry that once existed in Greece has been decimated by the German-dominated EU "single market." Factories across the country stand empty. If you want to get a sense, you can go to an online *Guardian* photo collection titled "Modern Ruins: The Ghost Factories of Greece" (15 May). The introduction comments that the pictures "show the remnants of the country's industrial past." Those remnants look like Detroit, except that it's the whole country.

Being from the U.S., where everything is sold by giant capitalist enterprises like Target, Wal-Mart, Kroger, Starbucks, etc., I was struck by the fact that retail shops, coffee houses and food markets all seemed to be run by individual families, part of the country's large petty bourgeoisie. It is now a large, ruined petty bourgeoisie, as many of these small businesses have gone belly-up. This sort of thing is what fascists feed off. Today, over half of Greek youth are unemployed, some 300,000 people have no access to electricity and 3.1 million (that is, about one-third of the population) lack health insurance. Nearly 50 percent of children live in poverty.

I have family connections with people who come from Greece and often visit the country. Upon returning from Patras, Greece's third-largest city, earlier this year, they commented that thousands of the under-25 crowd roam the streets with no jobs, nothing to do and nowhere to go. Whole blocks of stores and cafes are shuttered in what was once a booming tourist town.

Immigrants and the Fascist Threat

The crisis in Greece intersects a surge of racist hysteria over immigrants and refugees. Every week, thousands of desperate migrants are arriving in Greece after fleeing military conflicts that have destroyed their countries, particularly Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars are the direct product of interventions by the U.S. imperialists. In the process, Washington and its allies have fostered and deepened religious and ethnic antagonisms among the populations of these countries. The resulting tide of human misery is a real indictment of the imperialist system, under which the rulers of a handful of rich countries lord it over oppressed peoples across the globe.

So far this year, some 390,000 migrants have made the crossing by boat to Greece—more than 153,000 of them in September alone—compared to 43,500 such arrivals in Greece in *all* of 2014. The working class, as an elementary act of self-defense and solidarity with the oppressed, must defend immigrants against the racist frenzy and demand full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it into the country. In the U.S., as in Europe, we in the International Communist League demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants as well as an end to the detention, deportation and persecution of Muslims and other immigrants.

In Greece, the fascists of Golden Dawn

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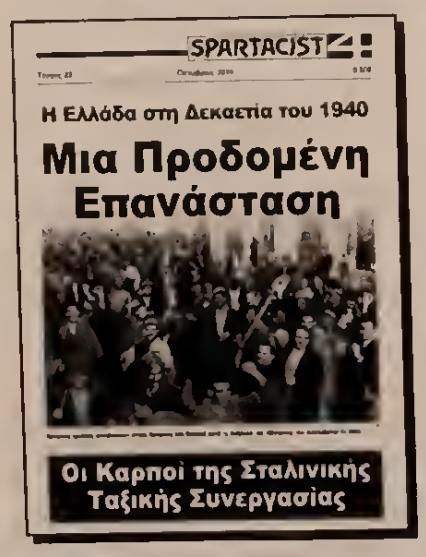

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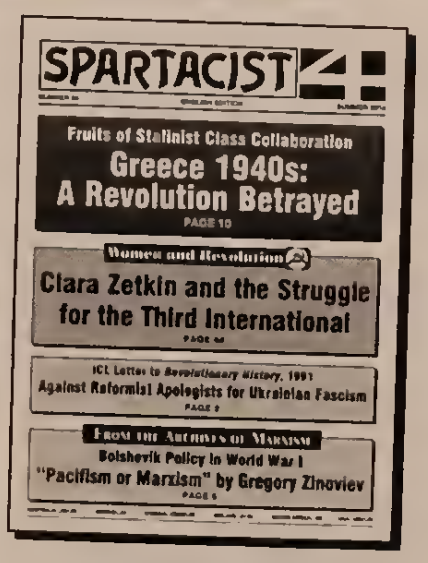

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are seeking to exploit the crisis. Portraying themselves as saviors of the nation, they are whipping up hatred against immigrants, who have been subjected to violent attacks. Two years ago, a fascist thug murdered an anti-fascist activist in a suburb of Piraeus, near Athens.

Golden Dawn is far from a fringe phenomenon. As an illustration, these fascists finished third in the September elections, with nearly 7 percent of the vote; six years ago they got only 0.3 percent. Notably, Golden Dawn has a lot of support in the ranks of the police and the upper echelons of the army. This is pretty ominous in a country where the 1967-74 military dictatorship known as the Regime of the Colonels was not all that long ago.

Greece is a country where the question, "How can we fight and defeat the attacks of the ruling class?" is urgently posed. The lessons of events there have direct application for those who seek to struggle against the capitalist rulers' offensive here in the U.S.

Under capitalism, a tiny layer of exploiters owns the factories, transportation systems, mines and, of course, the banks. That ruling class also controls the government, the police, the mass media and the education system. To acquire an understanding of the class nature of the state, one should read V.I. Lenin's classic work *The State and Revolution* (1917). The interests of the capitalist class are counterposed to those of the working class, whose labor is exploited by the capitalists for profit. The so-called "middle class" or petty bourgeoisie—professionals, small shopkeepers, farmers and the like—is a heterogeneous and highly stratified social layer that follows one or the other of the main classes.

To shore up profits, the capitalists cut wages, impose speedup and lay off workers. They produce misery without end. But there is a way out. Thanks to its central role in production, the proletariat has enormous potential social power. If the workers organize collectively, they can stop production, including through strike action and plant occupations, cutting off the flow of profits. By waging class struggle, the working class can throw back at least some of the capitalists' attacks. But since exploitation is endemic to capitalist production, struggles against the ravages of capitalism must be linked to a broader political perspective: sweeping away the profit system through workers socialist revolution and reorganizing society in the interests of the vast majority. The task of our organization is to forge Leninist vanguard parties—here and internationally—that can make the workers conscious of the need for the revolutionary overturn of capitalism.

Reuters

Supporters of fascist Golden Dawn at election rally, May 2014. Capitalist crisis has fueled far-right reaction.

Imperialism and Greek Capitalism

All capitalist countries are not "created equal." On a global scale, the imperialist powers of North America, Europe and Japan retard economic and social development in the poorer countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Within Europe, the advanced industrial nations—chiefly Germany—dominate the weaker countries in the east and south, including Greece. There is manifestly an element of national oppression in what the EU imperialists are doing to Greece, which has basically been placed in receivership, with all decisions made by the EU masters.

The dependent character of the modern Greek state did not begin with its joining the EU, but was stamped on it from birth. At the signing of the 1832 treaty that carved an independent Greece out of the decaying Ottoman Empire, no Greeks were present—only representatives of the "protecting" powers of Britain, France and Russia. An absolutist monarch, Otto of Bavaria, was imposed on the new country. I found that amazing; the British just said, "All right, Greeks—here's this dude from Bavaria, we decided that he's going to be your king."

NurPhoto

Capitalist austerity in Greece means widespread misery. Homeless man sleeping in central Athens.

Throughout the 19th century, Greece was a pawn of British diplomacy, particularly vis-à-vis tsarist Russia. In the early 1830s, to pay for the war against the Ottoman Turks, the Greek government contracted loans in the City of London on ruinous terms. British imperialist policy toward Greece was geared to using loans in order to subjugate the country and to bring about its complete financial and diplomatic dependency. Greece remained overwhelmingly agrarian, with its main export being Zante currants—you know, raisins. Still, there developed a wealthy commercial bourgeoisie based on merchant shipping and, later, banking.

Greece has a long history of sharp class struggle. During the Second World War the Greek workers and peasants, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), rose up in revolutionary upheaval against the Italian and German occupation forces as well as Greek bourgeois forces. The Civil War continued after the German withdrawal as the local capitalists—supported by Britain and the U.S.—sought to crush the revolt of the workers and poor peasants. For more on this upsurge and its betrayal by the KKE, I recommend our article "Greece 1940s: A Revolution Betrayed" (*Spartacist* No. 64, Summer 2014). During the latter phase of the Greek Civil War, the U.S. supplanted decaying British imperialism in Greece, using that country as a testing ground for tactics to crush social revolutions. I thought the U.S. first dropped napalm bombs in Vietnam—no! In 1949, the last year of the Civil War, U.S. planes rained down napalm on Greek guerrilla fighters. The American imperialists went on to use napalm in Korea and Vietnam, which facilitated the killing and maiming of millions of people.

Let me return to the European Union. We used to meet people who would naively ask: "Why are you against the EU; isn't it good that people can more easily travel around Europe?" The rape of Greece has made the EU's purpose a lot clearer, illustrating the correctness of our principled opposition to that imperialist bloc and the euro.

The EU is an alliance of capitalist countries seeking to augment their profits and spheres of influence by more efficiently exploiting workers throughout Europe. Its predecessor, the European Economic Community, was an economic adjunct to NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance directed against the Soviet Union. The USSR was a workers state, issuing out of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia that overthrew capitalist class rule. We Trotskyists always upheld the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, despite its degeneration under a nationalist bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin. That's because the Soviet workers state embodied enormous gains for the workers of the world.

Contrary to capitalist propaganda, the imperialists' anti-Soviet crusade had nothing whatsoever to do with "democracy" versus "totalitarianism." The U.S. has long propped up brutal military dictatorships the world over. Greece, a front-line NATO state, under the Colonels is a perfect example. In truth, the imperialists were determined to destroy the Soviet Union because it was living proof that the working people of the world were not forever condemned to be exploited by the capitalists. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s was a terrible defeat for workers everywhere, for which the Stalinists' betrayals bear a huge measure of responsibility.

Having established a unified Fourth Reich through capitalist counterrevolution in East Germany, the German bourgeois rulers used the EU as a vehicle to further their domination of the continent, while advancing the ability of the European powers to compete economically with U.S. imperialism. The various decrees and regulations imposed by the bankers in Frankfurt and the bureaucrats in Brussels have ruined the lives of millions in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and other poorer countries, while also reducing the living standards of workers in the imperialist centers. Can the EU be reformed or made to be a "social Europe" as the European reformists say? Dream on! No more than U.S. imperialism is going to start spreading freedom and democracy around the world.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist International which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution. This important document, which was adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL in early 1998, was published in the four language editions of *Spartacist* and additionally in eleven other languages.

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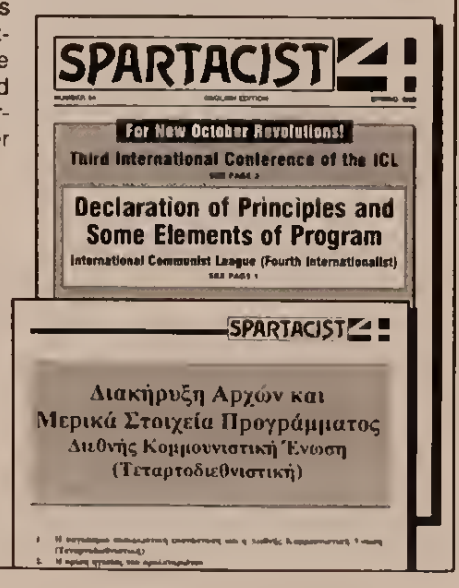

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Left: Protest against Blackfire Exploration over murder of Mariano Abarca, Chiapas, Mexico, 2009. Right: Workers protest Barrick Gold at May Day parade in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2013.

Canadian Mining in Latin America

Blood, Plunder and Profit

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *No. 186 (Fall 2015), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

In the build-up to the federal election [held on October 19], the parliamentary parties are vying in patriotic rhetoric about how Canada is, or can be, "the greatest country in the world." The brutality and greed of the Canadian mining industry, particularly in Latin America, exposes as an utter fraud the notion of Canada as a benevolent power on the world stage.

The Canadian mining corporations view Latin America as their own private El Dorado. In the spirit of the early conquistadors, their vast profits are underwritten by killings, disappearances and torture of those who stand in their way, by destruction of entire communities and by the dispossession of indigenous peoples. Last year, Shin Imai, a lawyer with the Justice and Corporate Accountability Project, said: "Our preliminary count shows that at least 50 people have been killed and some 300 wounded in connection with mining conflicts involving Canadian companies in recent years" (Inter Press Service, 31 October 2014). To cite only a few examples:

- El Salvador, 2009: Marcelo Rivera's body was found at the bottom of a well showing signs of torture; Ramiro Rivera was shot and killed when his car was ambushed; Dora "Alicia" Sorto was eight months pregnant when fatally shot. All were opponents of the Canadian-owned Pacific Rim mining company.
- Mexico, 2012: In Chihuahua, a married couple who had led protests against the Cascabel mine owned by Vancouver's MAG Silver were shot to death. The husband, Ismael, had previously been beaten by mining company employees. In Oaxaca, Bernardo Mendez was shot seven times while protesting near Vancouver-based Fortuna's Cuzcatlán mine.
- Guatemala, 2014: 16-year-old Topacio Reynoso was shot dead and her father Alex was seriously injured. Both were community leaders from Mataquescuintla, Jalapa, and actively opposed Vancouver-based Tahoe Resources' Escobal mine. According to Mining-Watch Canada, thousands of families in this area have suffered violence and repression for their opposition to Tahoe's mine.

These barbaric crimes merely scratch the surface. Canada's violent despoliation of this region is a perfect illustration of the workings of capitalist imperialism, an economic system based on the conquest or domination of the semicolonial world for raw materials, markets, cheap labour and spheres of influence. For Marxists, this also demonstrates how the Canadian capitalist state is an instrument of organized violence, wielded to further imperialist plunder and exploitation internationally, and to enforce workers' exploitation at home.

Canada's mining sector is one of the largest in the world. Fully 75 percent of the world's mining companies are headquartered here. This is thanks in large part to the lowest corporate tax rate in the G7 group of imperialist powers as well as a securities industry designed to promote mining. With a climate of impunity and generous, no-questions-asked public subsidies, Canada is, as the London *Guardian* put it, "a haven for the global mining industry" (24 April 2013).

Canada has 1,500 mining projects in Latin America; fully 41 percent of the large mining companies there are under its flag. The imperialist pillage of these countries—and the brutal repression it entails—is a joint venture between the venal local bourgeoisies and their imperialist patrons, chiefly the U.S. but also secondary powers like Canada. In this division of labour, the local rulers' military forces, police and death squads are subcontracted by the imperialists to ensure the seamless flow of profit.

Guatemala: Under the Imperialist Boot

Canadian mining in Guatemala has a particularly long and violent history, rooted in decades of plunder by the U.S. imperialists. To defend its "interests," the U.S. has sponsored one death-squad regime after another. During a 36-year campaign against a leftist guerrilla insurgency that began in 1960, some 200,000 people—mostly Mayan peasants—were killed and another 45,000 "disappeared." That same year, the Canadian mining giant Inco launched operations in Guatemala. However, open-pit mining was prohibited. As well, the leftist insurgents had their base of operations around the town of El Estor in the Izabal department where Inco wanted to build its open-pit nickel mine.

A 2012 York University report by Shin Imai and two colleagues titled "Accountability Across Borders: Mining in Guatemala and the Canadian Justice System" documented how Inco's problems were solved by the ruling military regime. An Inco-friendly mining code was written to permit "open sky mining" and Inco was granted generous tax concessions and a 40-year lease. Above all, it got the "stability" it demanded thanks to a reign of terror launched by the Guatemalan military. The indigenous people were driven out and between 3,000 and 6,000 killed to pave the way for Inco's mine.

The Inco mine shut down in 1982 when the price of nickel fell. In 2004 the mine, now called Fenix, was bought by another Canadian operation, Skye Resources. For the Mayan farmers who had gradually begun to reoccupy the area, this signalled a renewed wave of violence. Acts of great brutality took place at the hands of the police and military and at the behest of Skye Resources, including evictions and the burning of houses. Among the most grisly was the gang rape by cops and Fenix security of eleven women from the Mayan Q'eqchi' community. When the Toronto-based Hudbay bought the mine in 2008, the violence did not end, and the mining bosses continued to drive out the inhabitants. In 2009, protesters were shot at by the security thugs of the Guatemalan Nickel Company (owned by Hudbay). One man was murdered, another left paralyzed. Cases involving these shootings and the mass rapes are presently before the courts in Canada.

Everything Must Have Its Price

The Canadian capitalist government is deeply intertwined with the mining corporations, which it supports politically and financially. To this end, its embassies, diplomats, cabinet ministers and hired guns in Bay Street [Canada's financial center] law firms are mobilized. Their services include blackmail, economic and legal bullying and cover-up.

In Mexico, with more than 230 Canadian mining operations, the forces behind the violence against community leaders and mining opponents reads like a who's who of the mining industry. The well-documented crimes of these companies have not deterred Ottawa in its unflagging support to the industry. Among the most notorious is Calgary-based Blackfire, on whose behalf the Canadian embassy engaged in an intense lobbying campaign with the Chiapas state government. This was gratefully acknowledged by a Blackfire executive in an email sent to embassy officials in September 2008, thanking them for all "that the embassy has done to pressure the state government to get things going for us. We could not do it without your help" (*Toronto Star*, 8 December 2014).

In the aftermath of the November 2009 murder of Mariano Abarca, Ottawa again came to Blackfire's aid. Abarca was a leader of the Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining which had protested Blackfire's mine for contaminating rivers and destroying livestock and crops. He knew he was a target and had warned, "if anything happens to me, I blame the Canadian company Blackfire." Soon after, governor-general Michaëlle Jean and Tory cabinet minister Peter Kent were in Chiapas doing damage control. Faced with angry protesters, Jean prattled about "justice" while Kent brazenly claimed that Canadian mining companies in Mexico "are held up and recognized as virtual models of corporate social responsibility."

The Tories use "foreign aid" funding

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to support "community initiatives" linked to mining projects. Peru, one of the most mineral-rich countries in the region, is one recipient of such funds. A paltry $53 million will go to "development projects" in areas with Canadian mining operations, opening the door to the looting of billions of dollars of mineral wealth by these corporations. A Canada-Peru free trade agreement has further opened up the country to incursions by the mining companies.

This profitable triangular relationship between the mining industry and the Canadian and Peruvian governments has spawned bloody repression. Rosa Huamán, a community leader in northern Peru, told an October 2014 hearing of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that "the government has installed a police post that follows our activities and reports to the mining company and the government" (*Georgia Straight*, 5 December 2014). In 2011, at least four people were killed and 24 injured in protests against a silver mine owned by B.C.-based Bear Creek Mining Corp. Two years later, some 25 protesters against Vancouver's Candente Copper Corporation were wounded in clashes with police. In November, when over 400 protesters shut down construction on Hudbay's copper mine in Peru's southern Andes, a dozen women were attacked by Peruvian police while sitting outside the mining compound's front gates.

Against this backdrop, in late 2014 Canada unveiled a warmed-over version of its 2009 "Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy" for the mining industry. This is meant to paint a picture of a government that will no longer play ball with a few supposed bad apples who don't comply with its purported high standards. It's all smoke and mirrors, intended to pacify critics and suck in the gullible. Indeed, a CBC reporter nailed its actual purpose: "to increase the prospect of new business for our resource companies abroad" (14 November 2014).

Liberal Illusions in Canadian Imperialism

Under the Harper Tories, the Canadian ruling class has shed the "Canada the good" image. Yet this self-serving myth continues to be nurtured by the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party]. For their part, the United Steelworkers union seeks to pressure the government in Ottawa to make the mining companies answerable in Canadian courts, while MiningWatch Canada offers liberal nostrums about "ensuring corporate accountability." But real justice and "accountability" cannot come through the courts of the capitalist rulers. Then there is the related myth that Canada's bloody misdeeds abroad are an anomaly for this otherwise well-mannered country. This was captured by Murray Klippenstein, the Toronto lawyer for the Guatemalans' case against Hudbay, who made the astounding claim that "we would never tolerate these abuses in Canada."

To the contrary, when Native people stand their ground in Canada—at Oka, Quebec, at Gustafsen Lake, B.C. or more recently in Rexton, N.B. when the Mi'kmaq people sought to prevent fracking for oil on their lands without consent—they are typically met with massive police repression. While De Beers rakes in massive profits from its diamond mine in northeastern Ontario, the people of nearby Attawapiskat, where unemployment is 70 percent, get a mere pittance. In Canada and the U.S., as in the countries south of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo, aboriginal life is measured in poverty, police violence, racism and dispossession. The idea that the imperialists of this or any other country can be pressured to serve the interests of the oppressed is illusory.

Imperialism is not simply a reactionary policy of right-wing governments, but a global system rooted in the capitalist drive for profit. In 1916, the revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin noted in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that imperialism is "capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established," and "in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed." A small club of wealthy imperialist powers subordinates and oppresses the vast majority of the world's population. Dependent countries, such as those in Latin America, "politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence." The history of the entire subsequent century, including two interimperialist wars to redivide the world and countless colonial adventures, amply confirms Lenin's words.

Reuters

Lima, May 19: Unionized Peruvian mine workers on strike against outsourcing and threats of layoffs.

For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!

The mining operations of the Canadian ruling class have brought extreme suffering to the indigenous populations of Latin America. We vehemently defend these peoples against the predatory resource companies and their hired guns, as well as the ruling classes of the region.

We say that the vast mineral wealth of Latin America belongs to the toiling masses, in the first instance to the workers of that region. Under a rationally planned socialist economy, these resources would be used to eradicate hunger and poverty in a society of generalized abundance. When the working class rules throughout the Americas, the irrational, profit-driven pillage of resources will end and this wealth will be subject to the egalitarian and rational decisions of the working people.

Such a perspective requires internationalist class struggle. Instead, the pro-capitalist Canadian labour tops promote Maple Leaf nationalism, pitting workers here against their class brothers and sisters in other countries. When the NAFTA free trade agreement was being negotiated in 1991, the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian sections of the International Communist League issued a joint statement calling to "Stop U.S. 'Free Trade' Rape of Mexico." We explained that U.S. imperialism wanted to "turn Mexico into a giant *maquiladora*, or free trade zone—'free' of unions, and 'free' for capital" (*Spartacist Canada* No. 85, Fall 1991). In contrast, the labour bureaucrats' nationalchauvinist tirades against NAFTA served to set U.S. and Canadian workers against their Mexican class brothers and sisters, as well as each other. Over the past two decades, NAFTA has meant increased profits and power for the U.S. rulers and their Canadian junior partners through the superexploitation of Mexican workers and the economic ruination of Mexican peasants.

The need for united struggle by workers internationally flows directly from the global nature of the mining industry. Like mineworkers in Canada, those of Latin America are compelled by necessity to work, to sell their labour power. The workers who toil in the mines—in Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and elsewhere—have enormous potential social power to lead all the oppressed in anti-capitalist struggle. The billions in profits that flow into the pockets of the mining bosses, whatever their nationality, come from the surplus value created by the workers who extract the ore and truck it to ports for export.

In Peru, where mining accounts for as much as 15 percent of GDP, tens of thousands of workers in the National Mineworkers Federation struck in May against outsourcing and a measure that would allow massive layoffs should a mining company report losses. Faced with threats of firing from the companies, the strike had a limited character and duration. Nonetheless, it pointed to the potentially great power that these workers have to throttle the capitalists' profits. Historically, from Chile to Bolivia and north to Mexico, the struggles of mineworkers in Latin America have been among the most combative and far-reaching.

Throughout the region, intense poverty exists alongside fabulous wealth, an expression of combined and uneven development. The national bourgeoisies are utterly dependent upon imperialism and incapable of carrying out the economic modernization of society. Criss-crossed by artificial borders, bourgeois rule in much of Latin America has alternated between bloodsoaked military juntas and various forms of bourgeois populism, with the latter generally tailed by the left.

Instead of fantasies about the backward, imperialist-dependent bourgeoisie of one's own oppressed country as the vehicle for liberation, we fight for the perspective of permanent revolution, which was first developed by the Marxist leader Leon Trotsky. The complete and genuine solution of the tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation in the countries of Latin America can come only through the rule of the working class leading the subjugated nation, above all the indigenous peasant masses. On taking power, the working class cannot stop at the democratic tasks but must immediately continue with the socialist tasks, including the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class, collectivization and economic planning. To survive and flourish, such revolutions must be extended to the centres of world imperialism, pointing to the necessary perspective of workers revolution in the U.S. and Canada.

The ICL fights to build revolutionary, internationalist workers parties—part of a reforged Fourth International—that will link the struggles of workers in the semicolonies to those in the imperialist countries. The perspective outlined by Trotsky in "War and the Fourth International" (1934) retains all its force today:

> "South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states into one powerful federation. But it is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native comprador cliques is therefore: ***the Soviet United States of South and Central America.***
>
> "The national problem merges everywhere with the social. Only the conquest of power by the world proletariat can assure a real and lasting freedom of development for *all* nations of our planet." ■

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Palestinians...

(continued from page 1)

is heavily armed (including with hundreds of nuclear weapons) and bolstered by billions in U.S. military aid. For its part, U.S. imperialism just put a stamp of approval on the current Zionist offensive, pledging a $1 billion hike atop its already $3.1 billion in annual military aid. It is crucial for working people and the oppressed around the world to take a stand in defense of the Palestinian people. ***Down with U.S. aid to Israel! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!***

Reuters

AP

Left: Then-president Bill Clinton between Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and Yassir Arafat of the PLO at signing of 1993 Oslo Accords establishing Palestinian-controlled ghettos in Gaza and the West Bank. Right: President Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tour Israel's "Iron Dome" missile defenses, which U.S. helped to create, March 2013.

The Zionist State Must Be Shattered from Within

Israeli society has moved sharply to the right in the past several decades. Netanyahu won his fourth term in office last March through overt appeals to anti-Arab chauvinism, vowing to continue the occupation and screaming that Palestinian citizens of Israel would be going "in droves to the polls." Netanyahu accused leaders of the opposition Joint List—a coalition of Arab parties that won the third-largest number of seats in the Knesset (parliament)—of "incitement," insinuating that they, and indeed all Israeli Palestinians, constitute a traitorous "fifth column." In the last few weeks, many of these Palestinians who have (nominal) Israeli citizenship have been among the more than 1,000 Palestinians arrested, either for joining protests or even planning to do so. Netanyahu reached a new level of racist demagogy when he recently asserted that it was a Palestinian, the pro-German Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and not Hitler, who instigated the genocide of European Jewry in World War II. This grotesque absurdity, an affront to all the victims of the Nazi murder machine, underlines the utter cynicism with which the Zionist rulers have wielded the Holocaust to amnesty their manifold crimes against the Palestinian people.

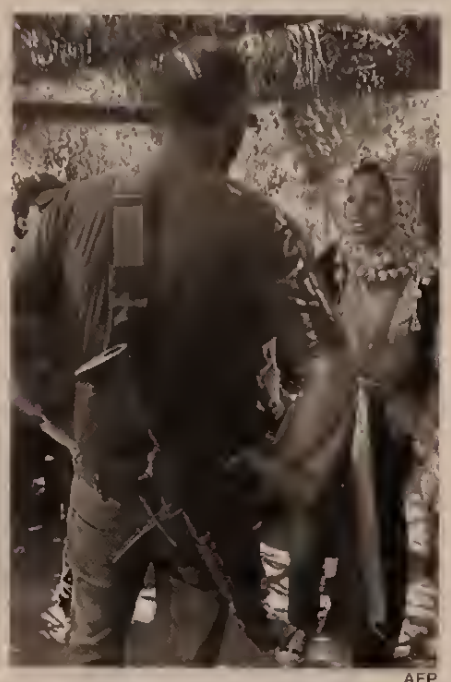
The reactionary mindset that was once on the periphery of Israeli society is now the common coin of many Zionist politicians. Advocates of "transfer"—the forcible expulsion of all Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, and even from within Israel itself—have moved from fringe to familiar. In March, Israel's then foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, openly demanded the beheading of supposedly disloyal Israeli Palestinians.

Today, the mayor of Jerusalem further emboldens the fascistic and ultra-Orthodox settlers to carry out pogroms and lynchings by urging Israeli Jews to arm themselves. On October 18, more than 200 settlers attacked two Palestinian villages near the West Bank town of Hebron, setting houses ablaze with firebombs. Days later, after four Palestinians were shot by Israeli soldiers, settlers provocatively marched through Palestinian areas of Hebron under Israeli military protection.

Amid a climate of racist hysteria, as the streets resound with cries of "Death to Arabs!" many fear being lynched by Zionist mobs. Mistaken for Arabs, some Israeli Jews have been attacked or shot dead by Zionist cops or fanatics. The daily terror to which black African immigrants in Israel are subjected was further underscored with the killing of Habtom Zarhum, a 29-year-old Eritrean asylum-seeker. Zarhum, whose only crime was that he was a black man in the vicinity of an attack at the Beersheba Central Bus Station, was shot by a security guard and then kicked and beaten by an Israeli mob as he lay dying in a pool of blood. An organizer of Zarhum's memorial service lamented, "Israelis have a license for racism."

The chauvinism rife throughout Israeli Jewish society was inherent in the Zionist project of creating a "Jewish homeland" in Arab Palestine. As the founding Zionists well knew, an exclusivist Jewish state could only be carved out through the dispossession and/or expulsion of the Palestinian people. And that is how the Israeli state was established: 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their land in 1948. The small armed camps set up by handfuls of Zionist and Orthodox diehards in the Occupied Territories seized in 1967 have since mushroomed into a population of some 650,000 Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The settler zealots serve the expansionist drive for a "Greater Israel" that, in turn, fuels an ever more virulent and widespread bigotry in the Israeli population.

The dismemberment and ghettoization of much of the Palestinian West Bank has led some Arab nationalists and liberal Zionists to abandon their former support for a "two-state solution." Liberal Israeli journalist Gideon Levy recently remarked in a *Haaretz* column (17 October): "One state already exists here, and has done so for 48 years." He went on to say that those "advocating the one-state solution are not thinking of this state—quite the opposite. They wish to undermine it and establish a different, more just and egalitarian regime.



AFP

June 2012: Armed Jewish settler blocks Palestinian woman from her own property, seized by Israel to expand Halamish settlement in West Bank.

When that is established, the hatred and despair will most likely be forgotten."

The truth of the matter is that within the framework of capitalism, there can be no just or egalitarian resolution for the Palestinian people. The Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Arab populations are interpenetrated, laying claim to the same land; under capitalism one state means one nation is dominant, i.e., the exercise of the right of national self-determination by one people necessarily comes at the expense of the other. Only in a socialist federation of the Near East can conflicting claims over land and resources be equitably resolved, and all discrimination on the basis of language, religion and nationality be eliminated. Viewed narrowly through the prism of that tiny plot of land called Israel/Palestine, this prospect appears impossible. The road to the liberation of the Palestinian masses lies in an internationalist class perspective that looks to the proletarian overthrow of bourgeois rule in Israel and also in Arab countries throughout the region (which are also home to several million Palestinians).

The stranglehold of Zionist chauvinism on the Israeli Jewish working class may today seem unbreakable. But Israel (like its Arab neighbors) is no exception to the Marxist understanding that capitalism creates its own gravedigger, the proletariat. Israel is a class-divided society, marked by huge income disparities and many political, national and ethnic fissures. In recent years, there have been protests by Jews against government austerity amid rising social discontent. The Israeli proletariat must be won to defend the Palestinian people against the Zionist ruling class, its own class enemy whose wealth is derived from the exploitation of the working class.

There is broad sympathy for the Palestinians among the well over one hundred million Arabs and many millions more Turks, Kurds, Iranians and others in the region, including significant concentrations of the industrial proletariat in Egypt, Iran and Turkey. These toilers are exploited and oppressed by their "own" ruling classes, who enforce imperialist domination. These bourgeois rulers channel justified anger against the subjugation of the Palestinians into anti-Jewish bigotry while themselves trampling on Palestinian refugees. In the course of intense class struggle and through the intervention of revolutionary Marxist parties, the workers of the Near East must be broken from all-sided bigotry and come to understand that they share a common historic interest in fighting to sweep away all the capitalist ruling classes of the region. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, fights to build Leninist vanguard parties to lead the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East.

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

U.S. capitalist politicians, continuing their cynical talk about a "peace" deal, call for "calm" on both sides. In a piece in the *New Yorker* (12 October), Columbia University professor Rashid Khalidi, a prominent defender of Palestinian rights, aptly comments that Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas's recent acknowledgment of the failure of the Oslo process "was long overdue." The 1993 Oslo accords were part of an effort by U.S. imperialism to impose a "Pax Americana" on the Near East in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which had provided crucial diplomatic support and aid to the PLO and various Arab nationalist regimes. The accords were never intended to lead to a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories, as their leftist and nationalist promoters claimed. At the time, in an article headlined "Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto," we pointed out that Oslo "does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination" and "would place the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" (*WV* No. 583, 10 September 1993). We warned that the PLO's political bankruptcy would allow anti-woman and anti-Jewish Islamic reactionaries such as Hamas to gain influence among the historically cosmopolitan Palestinian masses.

Khalidi concludes his piece by advising America's imperialist rulers to "stop hiding behind the fictions of Oslo" and "act vigorously to end a system of military occupation and colonization that would crumble without their support." Khalidi's view is shared by many in the Palestinian solidarity milieu in the U.S., especially those around the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Their appeals, directed in the first instance at university administrations and other institutions of corporate America, are aimed at getting U.S. imperialism to pressure its Zionist junior partners to ameliorate the plight of the Palestinians. This is a deadly illusion. The U.S. imperialists, who are responsible for well over a century of mass murder and torture on a global scale, including the recent bloody wars and occupations in the Near East, are foursquare behind Israel as it commits atrocities against the Palestinians.

As Netanyahu's freakout over the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran demonstrated, Israeli and American interests in the Near East do not always coincide. But the Zionist rulers know they can rely on bipartisan support from Washington. Those activists who hope against hope that the Democrats will some day do right by the Palestinians are oblivious to reality: historically, the Democrats have been even more fervent and bellicose than the Republicans in their support for Israel. After Obama's Iran deal, Hillary Clinton assured wealthy Jewish donors that she would be a better friend to Israel than Obama has been. And while Bernie Sanders, touted as some kind of "socialist" by much of the fake left, recently intoned that the U.S. should play a more "even-handed" role in dealing with the Palestinians, he supported Israel's blitzkrieg in Gaza last year and vows to continue military aid to the Zionist state. This is what pro-Palestinian activists can expect from the fraternal (i.e., not identical) twin parties of U.S. imperialism. No less misguided are the prevalent illusions in the United Nations, which is an instrument of the imperialist robber barons and butchers. Among its crimes, the UN presided over the Zionist partition in 1948 and set up the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon.

After decades of betrayals by their leadership and interminable imperialist-brokered sham "peace talks," today the Palestinian people are more isolated than ever. We seek to convince youth and workers who side with the Palestinians that a just, egalitarian world can be realized only through the overturn of the global capitalist order. This goal requires painstaking effort to build Marxist parties—forged in uncompromising struggle against all the political agents of capitalism and against every manifestation of oppression based on race, nation, religion or sex—and to win to such parties the advanced layers of the working class and the oppressed, not least in the American bastion of imperialist reaction. This is the task to which the International Communist League is dedicated. There is no other way. ***Down with Zionist terror! Down with U.S. imperialism! Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!*** ■

Refugees...

(continued from page 12)

which Germany joined, under the pretext of defending Kosovo. In reality, the U.S. aim was to insert a NATO military presence into the region. As our comrades in Germany wrote in *Spartakist* No. 210 (October 2015): "Kosovo is now a NATO protectorate, controlled by the Bundeswehr as the major component of the imperialist KFOR occupation forces. The German bourgeoisie sees the Balkans as its backyard, which it previously occupied under the Third Reich. *No deportations of Roma! Bundeswehr out of the Balkans!*"

EPA

Refugee hostel burns in Weissach im Tal, eastern Germany. This year there have been dozens of arson attacks against refugee housing in Germany.

Merkel Talks Turkey

Turkey has more than two million Syrian refugees, twice the number projected to apply to enter Europe this year, even though Turkey's population of 75 million is dwarfed by the over 500 million in the EU. Nevertheless, Merkel shamelessly tried to bribe Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to take the refugees off her hands. Aid totaling three billion euros, promises to "re-energize" Turkey's frozen EU membership application and visa liberalization for Turkish citizens visiting the EU were among the sweeteners offered.

The Turkish government, though, wants even more in return for its services, with Erdogan viewing the Syrian quagmire as an opportunity to pursue Turkey's broader ambitions. His regime has renewed its murderous decades-long war against the oppressed Kurds at home and sought to prevent the Kurds in Syria from establishing an autonomous region across the Turkish border. The Turkish working class must defend the Kurds against Erdogan's bloody war. We oppose the vicious state repression against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), notwithstanding our political differences with this nationalist group.

Platforma Spartakusowców

Protest in defense of immigrants in Warsaw, Poland, May 21.

We Marxists have no side in the ethnic-sectarian civil war in Syria. However, a year ago the U.S. intervened militarily, assembling a coalition that has to date conducted over 7,600 airstrikes against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria with the aid of spotters on the ground, including the Syrian and Iraqi Kurdish nationalists. Recognizing U.S. imperialism as the greatest danger to the working people and downtrodden of the planet, we declared: "Revolutionary Marxists have a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and their proxies, including the Syrian Kurdish nationalists, the [Iraqi Kurdish] *pesh merga*, the Baghdad government and its Shi'ite militias" (*WV* No. 1055, 31 October 2014). In addition, we demand the withdrawal of the other capitalist powers involved in the internecine conflict, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Russia. We look to the proletariat of the Near East as the force with the social power to lead the oppressed masses in the revolutionary overthrow of their capitalist rulers. This perspective must be linked to mobilizing workers in the imperialist countries in revolutionary struggle to sweep away their own ruling classes.

U.S. imperialism was emboldened to embark on the military interventions in the Near East that have devastated the social fabric of entire societies and made millions into refugees by the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92—a historic catastrophe for the world's working people. The 2001 invasion and occupation of Afghanistan resulted in the slaughter of untold numbers of people and forced many into Pakistan. In Iraq, the 2003 imperialist toppling of Saddam Hussein, whose bonapartist regime was based on the Sunni minority, unleashed bloody warfare among the Sunni, Shi'ite and Kurdish populations. The NATO bombing of Libya in 2011 that overthrew the regime of strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi set the stage for a massive exodus and the current turmoil there. The slaughter in Syria has led to 200,000 deaths and driven some four million from that country.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

In response to the enormous waves of refugees entering Europe, liberals and reformists have promoted fatuous illusions in the EU's humanitarian facade. A case in point is the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), whose German section raises the demands, "Abolish visa requirements for refugees" and "Tear down the fences at the external borders of the EU" (socialistworld.net, 14 October). All such variants of the call for "open borders" amount to advocating the abolition of national states under capitalism—an impossibility. For the CWI (whose U.S. section is Socialist Alternative), this notion also feeds the false hope of a reformed capitalism that provides decent lives for everyone.

The same CWI article also demands: "End the Dublin III agreement—for the right to seek asylum in a land of ones [sic] choice." Such advocates of "open borders" wrongly view the EU as a kind of superstate standing above nation-states, imbued with the power to erase internal borders. The Dublin III Regulation is deemed an impediment to this project because it stipulates that member states can deport refugees to the first EU country that they entered, which then decides whether to detain and/or deport them to their countries of origin. Marxists do not take a position on refugee "burden sharing" between capitalist governments. Rather, we oppose all deportations, irrespective of their legal basis.

The EU is a consortium of capitalist states for the purpose of maximizing the exploitation of the working class and for the economic domination and subjugation by the imperialist powers—predominantly Germany—of poorer countries like Greece. The Schengen Agreement, which allows passport-free travel between signatory countries, has nurtured illusions in European integration. Even while the agreement liberalized certain border crossings, the EU toughened measures to keep out those fleeing the inhuman conditions imposed by imperialism on their home countries. Nearly two decades ago, we noted in an International Communist League protest statement titled "'Fortress Europe' Bars Kurdish Refugees" (*WV* No. 683, 30 January 1998):

> "Like the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which envisioned a common European currency by the end of the century, Schengen was billed as a step toward melding the existing capitalist societies into a single supranational European state. But this is reactionary utopianism. The bourgeoisie, by its nature, is a nationally limited class, whose rise to power was closely associated with the consolidation of powerful nation-states, serving to protect the bourgeoisie's national market while competing internationally with rival capitalist states."

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) formally opposes the EU, a position contradicted by its criminal refusal to call for a "no" vote to EU austerity in the July referendum in Greece. Its opposition to the EU proceeds from a nationalist standpoint. The KKE calls for "abolition of the Dublin Regulations and the Schengen Agreement" and proposes "immediate transit of refugees from the [Greek] islands to their final destination countries, under the responsibility of the EU and UN, even utilizing direct charter flights" (kke.gr, 23 September). This touching concern for the EU and UN to provide refugees with safe passage *out of Greece* echoes the complaint of Greece's Syriza government that the country is becoming a "warehouse of souls," that is, burdened by too many refugees.

Our approach is that of proletarian internationalist opposition to the entire construct of the EU. Our comrades in Greece call for a Greek exit from the EU and the euro, while the Spartacist League/Britain calls for an exit in the promised referendum on Britain's membership in the EU. Leaving the EU and the eurozone will obviously not end capitalist exploitation and imperialist subjugation. But by dealing a blow to this club of bankers and bosses, it would place the working class, especially but not only in Greece, in a better position to struggle for its own interests. Our program is for proletarian revolutions to expropriate the capitalist exploiters and establish a Socialist United States of Europe.

Historically, the Marxist movement has recognized the potential for foreign-born workers to play a vanguard role. In 1866, when the British master tailors tried to recruit Belgian, French, Swiss and, later, German workers to undercut wages, the International Workingmen's Association mobilized the workers movement to defeat these attacks. In a letter, Karl Marx observed: "It is a point of honour with the German workers to prove to other countries that they, like their brothers in France, Belgium and Switzerland, know how to defend the common interests of their class and will not become *obedient mercenaries of capital* in its struggle against labour" ("A Warning," 4 May 1866). Writing in *The Civil War in France* about the 1871 Paris Commune, the first example of the working class taking power, Marx pointed out, "The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause." The Commune made a German worker, Leo Frankel, its Minister of Labor and honored two Polish communards by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris.

The ICL, too, recognizes that the immigrant workers in Europe's multiethnic working class represent living links to the exploited and oppressed in their countries of origin. As such, they are a vital component of our perspective of permanent revolution, which in dependent countries is the only way to break the chains of imperialist subjugation and end all-sided misery: the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the Near East, the struggle against imperialism and its local satrap regimes and for a socialist federation of the region must be linked to the fight for workers rule in the U.S. and European imperialist heartlands. Together with proletarian revolutions in the other imperialist centers as well as the underdeveloped world, the creation of a socialist Europe would lead to a vast expansion of the productive forces of all countries in an international planned economy. The resulting abolition of material scarcity would propel mankind to new heights, rendering war- and poverty-driven emigration as well as national frontiers relics of a distant past.

Toward that end, the ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

No Deportations! Down With the European Union!

Imperialist Mayhem Fuels Refugee Crisis

Reuters

September 16: Refugees blocked from entering EU by barbed wire fence and border guards at Hungarian-Serblan border.

The U.S. and European imperialist powers are to blame for the plight of hundreds of thousands of desperate people trying to enter Europe. In particular, U.S.-led wars and occupations in the Near East have forced millions to flee their homes. With the ensuing mass inflow into Europe (only a tiny percentage of the world's 60 million refugees), the European Union (EU) has ramped up repressive measures to block entry and hasten deportations.

The EU's response to the horrific mass drownings of some 2,500 refugees in the Mediterranean earlier this year was to further militarize the borders. Member states, including Germany, Britain, France and Italy, dispatched warships to the coast of Libya and elsewhere, ostensibly to deter "people smugglers." But the real purpose was to prevent refugees from reaching the shores of racist "Fortress Europe."

With the door closing on Mediterranean routes, refugees fleeing Syria and other war-torn countries had little choice but to make the journey through the Balkans. In August, many thousands streamed into Hungary every day, even as the viciously anti-immigrant government in Budapest unleashed cops on the refugees and threatened mass deportations. Recognizing that the influx was all but unstoppable, German chancellor Angela Merkel announced that the refugees trapped in Hungary would be welcome to enter Germany via Austria. This gambit helped refurbish the image of German imperialism: Merkel went from being widely reviled for her role in the Greek debt crisis to being celebrated as the EU's "humanitarian" face.

With upwards of 10,000 people a day pouring into Germany, a racist backlash broke out from within Merkel's own party, the Christian Democratic Union, and its Bavarian sister party. Germany quickly introduced controls at the Austrian border. Along with French president François Hollande, Merkel attempted to force other EU member states to "share the burden" and accept mandatory quotas of refugees. This move provoked an uproar within the EU, highlighting its instability. In Britain, where the ruling Conservatives vie with the racist, anti-immigrant "euro-sceptics" of the UK Independence Party, Prime Minister David Cameron refused to accept a quota. Meanwhile, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban dismissed the German proposal as "moral imperialism."

Reuters

Al-Katerji district in Aleppo, July 29. Syria has been devastated by sordid civil war and imperialist bombardment, fueling refugee crisis.

The EU's vaunted passport-free internal borders were never an obstacle to the mass deportation of those deemed undesirable by the capitalist rulers, e.g., Roma (Gypsies) expelled from France. Recent events have now made a complete mockery of any such pretensions. Hungary erected razor-wire fences on its borders and passed legislation making illegal border-crossing a crime punishable by up to five years in jail. A Bulgarian border patrol shot and killed an Afghan refugee. EU leaders came up with yet another round of tough anti-immigrant laws. In Germany, the Bundestag passed new legislation to speed up processing and deportation and is debating whether to create refugee "transit zones," which have been likened to concentration camps.

Anti-immigrant racism has again flared up on the streets of Germany, too. In early October, some 10,000 hardcore racists and outright fascists marched through Dresden condemning Merkel and chanted, "Deport, deport!" That lynch mob was organized by the racist, anti-Muslim Pegida outfit, which has newfound wind in its sails. When Pegida claimed buses of "invaders" were headed to a refugee camp in Saxony, hundreds of locals set up barricades to keep immigrants out.

Notably, the German union IG Metall issued a September 8 declaration, "Towards a Sustainable Refugee Policy Based on Solidarity," that among other things "condemns any and all acts of violence towards refugees in the strongest possible terms." The point, however, should not be for labor to give policy advice to the bourgeois government, the masters of divide-and-rule, but to mobilize concrete acts of solidarity, such as defense of refugee hostels against racist attack and opposition to deportations. The squalid debate over who is a "genuine" refugee must be rejected wholesale, with the working class instead taking up the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, regardless of how they entered the country.

For the mass of immigrants, refugee status is in effect the only way to obtain the right to remain in an EU country. The capitalist rulers select refugees according to the needs of the economy. Germany's aging population and low birth rate has resulted in labor shortages in certain sectors. Syrian refugees, who are often relatively educated and skilled, are more likely to be given legal status than those from poverty-stricken Kosovo, where one in four people live on 1.20 euros ($1.32) per day. Germany has added Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro to its list of "safe states," virtually guaranteeing that immigrants from these countries—particularly Roma—will be deported.

The current refugee crisis in Europe is the worst since at least that which accompanied the fratricidal bloodletting triggered by the 1991 counterrevolutionary breakup of Yugoslavia, in which German imperialism played a major part. In the early-mid 1990s, the U.S. led a bombing campaign in Bosnia, followed by the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999,

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1078 13 November 2015

As de Blasio Launches "Affordable Housing" Scam

Real Estate Barons Devour New York

WV Photo

Office of the Mayor

WV Photo

While homeless people have to sleep on subway platforms, ultra-luxury condos at 56 Leonard Street in lower Manhattan (right) sell for as much as $47 million. Center: Mayor Bill de Blasio (second from right) with real estate mogul Bruce Ratner (to his right) breaking ground on new Pacific Park development at Brooklyn's Atlantic Yards, December 2014.

Two years after New York City's liberal Democrat Bill de Blasio rode his mantra of a "tale of two cities" into City Hall, low wages, rotten schools and racist cop terror are as much a daily fact of life as under his predecessor, billionaire Michael Bloomberg. Nothing looms as large on the index of misery as housing—for the tens of thousands without any; for the predominantly black and Latino families in the dilapidated, rat-infested projects; for those terrorized by landlords into abandoning apartments that have been home for decades; for nearly everyone else seeking a roof over their heads without mortgaging their first-born child.

With rents rising as fast as ugly glass towers, the most visible sign of the housing crisis is the swelling number of homeless. In the financial capital of U.S. imperialism, the official homeless population (those in shelters) reached a record 60,000 this summer—enough to overfill Yankee Stadium. Untold more sleep in the parks, streets, subways and, if lucky enough, their cars. It has long been a truism that thousands of workers are a missing paycheck away from the streets. Today, the ranks of the homeless include many holding one or more regular jobs. Among them are some 300 full-timers on the NYC payroll.

Enter the "affordable housing" plan de Blasio rolled out this summer. A *New York Times* editorial (11 August) lauding the

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Homeless Hell in the City of Angels

Opulent mansions and legions of the poor: for this stark contrast Los Angeles has been called "the capital of the Third World." Now the City of Angels has become the homeless capital of America, a city of shanties. In the past two years, the number of people living in tents, makeshift camps and their own vehicles has shot up by 85 percent in L.A. County. According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, as of January there were over 44,000 homeless people in the county and 26,000 in the city itself. Once mostly confined to downtown's infamous Skid Row, today homeless people are found everywhere, from Pasadena to the Westside, from freeway medians to community college campuses.

In the 1970s, black Democratic mayor Tom Bradley purposely concentrated the homeless on Skid Row. Downtown was a ghost town after dark, shunned by office workers and the rich alike, inhabited only by those living in single-room-occupancy hotels or in cardboard boxes on the streets. But now, with construction cranes crowding the downtown skyline, a flood of new expensive apartments and restaurants has replaced cheap hotel rooms, motels and single-room apartments—once the last refuge of the poor. Meanwhile, skyrocketing rents are driving residents out of previously working-class areas like Highland Park and Boyle Heights. Growing numbers of working people find their wages too low to afford a place to live.

In addition to those newly evicted, thousands discharged from L.A. county jails, state prisons and foster homes with no prospects end up on the streets, including up to 20 percent of those released by court order in response to California's grotesque prison overcrowding. L.A. hospitals have become notorious for "patient dumping"—dropping mentally ill and indigent patients on Skid Row, still in their hospital gowns. Large numbers of homeless people suffer from untreated addiction and/or HIV; 30 to 40 percent are seriously mentally ill or disabled. In the filthy conditions, infectious disease is rampant; since 2007, tuberculosis has infected dozens, claiming the lives of at least eleven people. Flesh-eating, drug-resistant "Skid Row staph" infections are widespread.

The 54 blocks that make up Skid Row are home to several thousand people, the largest concentration of unsheltered people in the country. The fact that most of them are black brutally illustrates the racist reality of American capitalism. In L.A. County as a whole, ***50 percent*** of the homeless are black, although black people make up only ***9 percent*** of the population.

It is a damning indictment of capitalism that huge numbers of people, disproportionately blacks and Latinos, struggle for the basic necessities of life—food, housing, sanitation, employment, health care—in one of the richest cities in the country. The situation cries out for a public works program to build affordable, quality, integrated housing, schools, clinics and libraries, as well as efficient public transportation across the entire city. Union-run minority recruitment and job-training programs are desperately needed to give jobs to

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"Karl Marx" by V.I. Lenin

We print below the concluding section of Lenin's outline of Marx's life and ideas—from dialectical materialism to surplus value to socialism. The first five installments were published in WV *Nos. 1073-1077 (4 and 18 September and 2, 16 and 30 October).*

PART SIX

Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat

After examining, as early as 1844-45, one of the main shortcomings in the earlier materialism, namely, its inability to understand the conditions or appreciate the importance of practical revolutionary activity, Marx, along with his theoretical work, devoted unremitting attention, throughout his lifetime, to the tactical problems of the proletariat's class struggle. An immense amount of material bearing on this is contained in *all* the works of Marx, particularly in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels, published in 1913. This material is still far from having been brought together, collected, examined and studied. We shall therefore have to confine ourselves here to the most general and brief remarks, emphasising that Marx justly considered that, without *this* aspect, materialism is incomplete, one-sided, and lifeless. The fundamental task of proletarian tactics was defined by Marx in strict conformity with all the postulates of his materialist-dialectical *Weltanschauung* [worldview]. Only an objective consideration of the sum total of the relations between absolutely all the classes in a given society, and consequently a consideration of the objective stage of development reached by that society and of the relations between *it* and other societies, can serve as a basis for the correct tactics of an advanced class. At the same time, all classes and all countries are regarded, not statically, but dynamically, i.e., not in a state of immobility, but in motion (whose laws are determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded from the standpoint, not only of the past, but also of the future, and that not in the vulgar sense it is understood in hy the "evolutionists," who see only slow changes, but dialectically: "...in developments of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day," Marx wrote to Engels, "though later on there may come days in which twenty years are embodied" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 3, p. 127). At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand, utilising the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called "peaceful" development in order to develop the class-consciousness, strength and militancy of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, directing all the work of this utilisation towards the "ultimate aim" of that class's advance, towards creating in it the ahility to find practical solutions for great tasks in the great days, in which "twenty years are embodied." Two of Marx's arguments are of special importance in this connection: one of these is contained in *The Poverty of Philosophy* and concerns the economic struggle and economic organisations of the proletariat; the other is contained in the *Communist Manifesto* and concerns the political tasks of the proletariat. The former runs as follows: "Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance—combination.... Combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups... and in face of always united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them [i.e., the workers—*Lenin*] than that of wages.... In this struggle—a veritable civil war—all the elements necessary for a coming hattle unite and develop. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character." Here we have the programme and tactics of the economic struggle and of the trade union movement for several decades to come, for all the lengthy period in which the proletariat will prepare its forces for the "coming battle." All this should be compared with numerous references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labour movement, showing how industrial "prosperity" leads to attempts "to buy the proletariat" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1, p. 136), to divert them from the struggle; how this prosperity in general "demoralises the workers" (Vol. 2, p. 218); how the British proletariat becomes "hourgeoisified"—"this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the bourgeoisie" (Vol. 2, p. 290); how its "revolutionary energy" oozes away (Vol. 3, p. 124); how it will be necessary to wait a more or less lengthy space of time before "the British workers will free themselves from their apparent bourgeois infection" (Vol. 3, p. 127); how the British labour movement "lacks the mettle of the Chartists" (1866; Vol. 3, p. 305); how the British workers' leaders are becoming a type midway between "a radical bourgeois and a worker" (in reference to [George] Holyoak[e], Vol. 4, p. 209); how, owing to Britain's monopoly, and as long as that monopoly lasts, "the British workingman will not budge" (Vol. 4, p. 433). The tactics of the economic struggle, in connection with the general course (***and oatcome***) of the working-class movement, are considered here from a remarkably broad, comprehensive, dialectical, and genuinely revolutionary standpoint.

The *Communist Manifesto* advanced a fundamental Marxist principle on the tactics of the political struggle: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." That was why, in 1848, Marx supported the party of the "agrarian revolution" in Poland, "that party which brought about the Cracow insurrection in 1846." In Germany, Marx, in 1848 and 1849, supported the extreme revolutionary democrats, and subsequently never retracted what he had then said about tactics. He regarded the German hourgeoisie as an element which was "inclined from the very heginning to betray the people" (only an alliance with the peasantry could have enabled the bourgeoisie to completely achieve its aims) "and compromise with the crowned representatives of the old society." Here is Marx's summing-up of the German hourgeoisie's class position in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—an analysis which, incidentally, is a sample of a materialism that examines society in motion, and, moreover, not only from

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Saint-Denis

Armed workers man barricades of the Paris Commune, the world's first proletarian dictatorship, 1871.

TROTSKY

LENIN

For New October Revolutions!

The workers of Russia rose to power under the leadership of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky's Bolshevik Party on 7 November 1917 (October 25 in the old Russian calendar) with the perspective that the Russian Revolution would be the opening shot of world socialist revolution. In a 1942 speech, American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon described the significance of the October Revolution, which demonstrated in practice how the proletariat, led by a Leninist vanguard party, can seize state power and sweep away the capitalist system. Fatally undermined by nearly seven decades of Stalinist betrayal, the Soviet Union was ultimately destroyed through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. The International Communist League aims for new October Revolutions throughout the world.

November 7, 1917. The death sentence on the old order of capitalism and the beginning of the new order of world socialism were both proclaimed on that day. And whatever vicissitudes, whatever setbacks, betrayals or defeats may overtake the proletariat on the road to that final goal; however sharp and deep may be the zigzags in the line which charts the course of the struggle through which humanity shall pass from capitalism to socialism; whatever may befall: the starting point in the line of development will always be traced to that great day which we commemorate tonight—November 7, 1917....

Marx and Engels lifted the conception of socialism from utopia to science. The Russian Revolution developed scientific socialism from theory into action, and proved several things that hefore had been ahstract generalizations and predictions. The Russian Revolution proved in action that certain things were true beyond all further doubt. The first of these things proved hy the revolution was that *it* is possible for the workers to take power. It is possible for the workers to forge out of their ranks a party that is capable of leading the struggle to victory. And the workers in all countries will everlastingly remember that. Nothing can erase from history that example. Victory of the proletariat is possible—the Russian Revolution in action, in blood and fire, proved that it is so.

—James P. Cannon, "The 25th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution" (November 1942)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Once Again on ISIS and U.S. Imperialism

14 Septemher 2015

To the editor:

In its reply to Loren S.'s letter of May 29, *Workers Vanguard* describes Islamic State as anti-imperialist, declaring: "We take a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and forces acting as their proxies."

This is completely at odds with the facts. Islamic State is a wholly owned subsidiary of Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states. While it grew out of the communalist slaughters triggered by the U.S. invasion of Iraq, this is half the story. As Saudi Arabia has adopted a higher and higher ideological profile in the wake of the U.S.-sponsored jihad against the Soviet-backed government of Afghanistan, it has increasingly turned its ire against its great rivals, the Shi'ites of Iran, Iraq, and Hezbollah. The Wahhabists are not the only ones guilty of sectarianism, but there is no question as to who has been the more aggressive. Even prior to 9/11 and the Iraq invasion, Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan told Sir Richard Dearlove, head of the British Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6: "The time is not far off in the Middle East, Richard, when it will be literally 'God help the Shia.' More than a billion Sunnis have simply had enough of them." The genocidal implications of that statement should be clear.

As communalist passions have erupted, the Saudis and their fellow petro-states have thus poured money and weapons into the Sunni side, transforming the mujahideen into a powerful international force. By August 2012, the Defense Intelligence Agency reported that Al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and similar groups were the driving force behind the anti-Assad revolt, that they were seeking to establish a "Salafist principality" in eastern Syria as part of a general anti-Shi'ite jihad, and that their western backers, the Gulf states, and Turkey were all comfortable with such an outcome. Last October, Vice President Joe Biden told an audience at Harvard's Kennedy School that "the Saudis, the emirates, etc....were so determined to take down Assad and essentially have a proxy Sunni-Shia war...[that] they poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of tons of military weapons into...Al Nusra and Al Qaeda and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world," groups that eventually morphed into ISIS. According to *The New York Times*, U.S. policy is not to bomb IS when it is battling Syrian government troops, an indication that, despite Obama's fulminations, it still regards Islamic State as useful proxy against Assad.

The Assad dictatorship has many sins to answer for. But what we are now witnessing in the Middle East is a combined assault by the U.S., Turkey, the Saudis, and other members of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] on a Third World nationalist state that has long been in the crosshairs of U.S. imperialism. So unless WV is willing to describe Qatar, the UAE, and other such petro-states as anti-imperialist, it's hard to see how it can use the same term with regard to IS.

Daniel Lazare

***WV* replies:**

Daniel Lazare engages in more than a little journalistic three-card monte to support his charge that *WV* describes the quite gruesome forces that constitute ISIS as anti-imperialist. In fact the word "anti-imperialist" was nowhere used in our response to Loren S. to describe the Islamic State. We made our position crystal clear in the very next sentence to the one from which Lazare draws his quote: "At the same time, we are in staunch political opposition to ISIS, whose bloodthirsty methods and retrograde outlook are truly repugnant."

We do stand with ISIS when it targets the forces of U.S. imperialism and its proxies in the region. (Its military conflicts with the U.S. go unmentioned in Lazare's letter.) As we have stressed since the U.S. began air strikes against ISIS last year, any setback for the U.S. and its proxies would impede imperialist designs for the region and be in the interests of the exploited and the oppressed. That statement no more means that ISIS is anti-imperialist than President Obama's now-abandoned promise to withdraw U.S. military forces from the region made him a champion of world peace.

It should be noted that Lazare, a sometimes cogent critic of U.S. foreign policy, has written elsewhere about the conflagration in the Near East and the incoherency of Washington's policies. Not so in his letter to *WV* in which ISIS absurdly becomes a part of the imperialist-led crusade against Syrian strongman Bashar al-Assad. Lazare only perceives the financing that has been channeled to ISIS from the Arabian Peninsula and the fact that the U.S. does not bomb ISIS forces on the infrequent occasions that they directly engage Syrian government troops. Left unmentioned are the 6,000-plus bombing raids carried out by the U.S. against ISIS, including the months-long bombing of Kobani. During that battle, ISIS was confronted by Kurdish nationalist forces there that signed on as ground troops and spotters for the U.S. imperialists.

The existing coalition against Assad, which Lazare claims is a Saudi-sponsored Sunni alliance, is in fact riddled with contradictions. ISIS forces have launched terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabian cities after its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, denounced the Saudi monarchy as "traitors to Islam." In response, the regime launched a police roundup of dozens of suspected ISIS supporters. Then there is the not small matter of Turkey's increasing airstrikes against Kurdish forces, no doubt the most effective anti-ISIS ground troops, after Ankara allowed the U.S. use of its air bases to conduct bombing raids last July.

Lazare's omissions and obfuscations are clearly not just in the service of propping up his phony charge that *WV* describes ISIS as "anti-imperialist." Lazare's unstated aim becomes clear in his recent articles on the Syrian conflict, in which he complains that the Obama administration has been taken hostage by hawks in Washington. Lazare goes on to offer the following: "Conceivably, Obama could have reversed course and admitted that the Russians are of course right and that supporting Assad is preferable to the nightmare of seeing a black ISIS banner fluttering from the glorious Umayyad Mosque in Damascus" ("On Syria, Incoherence Squared," consortiumnews.com, 11 September). Alas, he opines, that would be a bridge too far for the president, who is too wedded to the concerns of Washington's main allies in the region, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Lazare would hope Russian president Putin's policy carries the day. As Marxists, our main opposition is to the imperialists. We also oppose all the other capitalist powers involved in the squalid civil war in Syria (including Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) and call for them to leave.

Lazare's differences with *WV* are fundamental. His quest is for a rational U.S. imperialist policy in the Near East. Our understanding is that it is in the nature of imperialism to subjugate, oppress and exploit the world's toiling masses. Whatever policy differences exist among the imperialist rulers and their servitors, such are all in the service of that fundamental nature. The reality is that, since its development over a century ago, capitalist imperialism has offered a variety of supposedly noble purposes to justify its slaughter of tens of millions of people. Today, U.S. imperialism, the foremost imperialist power, is the greatest enemy of the world's workers and oppressed.

Our perspective is diametrically opposed to Lazare. In defending ISIS from the blows of the imperialists, we recognize that any setback for Washington could also promote domestic opposition to U.S. imperialism within a war-weary populace that has been ground down by years of economic crisis. As we expressed in our reply to Loren S.'s letter, "We Marxists aim to turn the disillusionment and anger of working people in the U.S. into class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. It is through such struggle that the proletariat will be won to the program of socialist revolution to destroy the imperialist beast from within."■

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the aspect of a motion that is ***backward***: "Without faith in itself, without faith in the people, grumbling at those above, trembling before those below...intimidated by the world storm...no energy in any respect, plagiarism in every respect...without initiative...an execrable old man who saw himself doomed to guide and deflect the first youthful impulses of a robust people in his own senile interests...." (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 1848; see *Literarischer Nachlass*, Vol. 3, p. 212.) About twenty years later, Marx declared, in a letter to Engels (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 3, p. 224), that the Revolution of 1848 had failed because the bourgeoisie had preferred peace with slavery to the mere prospect of a fight for freedom. When the revolutionary period of 1848-49 ended, Marx opposed any attempt to play at revolution (his struggle against [Karl] Schapper and [August] Willich), and insisted on the ability to work in the new phase, which in a quasi-"peaceful" way was preparing new revolutions. The spirit in which Marx wanted this work to be conducted is to be seen in his appraisal of the situation in Germany in 1856, the darkest period of reaction: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War" (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 2, p. 108). While the democratic (bourgeois) revolution in Germany was uncompleted, Marx focussed every attention, in the tactics of the socialist proletariat, on developing the democratic energy of the peasantry. He held that [Ferdinand] Lassalle's attitude was "objectively...a betrayal of the whole

Viktor Bulla

Red Guard detachment of "Vulkan" factory, Petrograd, during Russian October Revolution, 1917.

workers' movement to Prussia" (Vol. 3, p. 210), incidentally because Lassalle was tolerant of the Junkers [landowning aristocrats] and Prussian nationalism. "In a predominantly agricultural country," Engels wrote in 1865, in exchanging views with Marx on their forthcoming joint declaration in the press, "...it is dastardly to make an exclusive attack on the bourgeoisie in the name of the industrial proletariat but never to devote a word to the patriarchal exploitation of the rural proletariat under the lash of the great feudal aristocracy" (Vol. 3, p. 217). From 1864 to 1870, when the period of the consummation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany was coming to an end, a period in which the Prussian and Austrian exploiting classes were struggling to complete that revolution in one way or another *from above*, Marx not only rebuked Lassalle, who was coquetting with [German chancellor Otto von] Bismarck, but also corrected [Wilhelm] Liebknecht, who had lapsed into "Austrophilism" and a defence of particularism; Marx demanded revolutionary tactics which would combat with equal ruthlessness both Bismarck and the Austrophiles, tactics which would not be adapted to the "victor"—the Prussian Junker—but would immediately renew the revolutionary struggle against him ***also in the conditions*** created by the Prussian military victories (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 3, pp. 134, 136, 147, 179, 204, 210, 215, 418, 437, 440-41). In the celebrated Address of the International of September 9, 1870, Marx warned the French proletariat against an untimely uprising, but when an uprising nevertheless took place (1871), Marx enthusiastically hailed the revolutionary initiative of the masses, who were "storming heaven" (Marx's letter to [Ludwig] Kugelmann). From the standpoint of Marx's dialectical materialism, the defeat of revolutionary action in that situation, as in many others, was a lesser evil, in the general course ***and outcome*** of the proletarian struggle, than the abandonment of a position already occupied, than surrender without battle. Such a surrender would have demoralised the proletariat and weakened its militancy. While fully appreciating the use of legal means of struggle during periods of political stagnation and the domination of bourgeois legality, Marx, in 1877 and 1878, following the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, sharply condemned [Johann] Most's "revolutionary phrases"; no less sharply, if not more so, did he attack the opportunism that had for a time come over the official Social-Democratic Party, which did not at once display resoluteness, firmness, revolutionary spirit and a readiness to resort to an illegal struggle in response to the Anti-Socialist Law (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 4, pp. 397, 404, 418, 422, 424; cf. also letters to [Friedrich] Sorge).■

Drop All Charges Against Air France Workers! No Layoffs!

We print below a translation of an October 21 leaflet issued by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France. A number of Air France workers are facing criminal charges and company discipline after a strike rally on October 5 at Paris Charles de Gaulle (Roissy) airport during which two managers lost their shirts. Five strikers have been charged with "gang assault" and another eleven with "defacement of property." The company is trying to fire a total of 18 workers. The Air France events have really touched a nerve in France. Some 5,000 workers and their supporters demonstrated in Paris on October 22 to demand that the charges and disciplinary measures be dropped. Union members have been protesting at the disciplinary hearings and are being mobilized for the start of the trials.

The government wasted no time in avenging the humiliation of Air France managers—representatives of French capitalism—who on October 5 fled with their shirts torn off as workers jeered. Prime Minister Manuel Valls had maintenance and cargo workers arrested at their homes at 6 a.m. in front of their families. Five have been charged and face up to three years in jail, with trials set for December 2.

The entire workforce across all job categories must mobilize to demand: *Drop all charges! Stop the disciplinary proceedings already targeting some 20 workers!* If the government and the Air France bosses succeed in their attacks on the Air France Five, it will directly pave the way for implementing 2,900 job cuts and layoffs. In the name of competitiveness vis-à-vis foreign and low-cost airlines, the bosses will try to wipe out all existing gains, setting a new precedent for attacking workers in other sectors.

The Air France Five are all employed in the industrial divisions of the company. They were targeted not so much for their alleged participation in the events of October 5, but as part of an attempt to re-establish the division between ground workers and flight crews, who, for once, had united against the threat of layoffs faced by both flight and ground personnel. This unity among workers across all job categories has highlighted the formidable power the workers hold. This power must be mobilized in strike action to scuttle the bosses' "Transform" and "Perform" plans.

While Emmanuel Macron, the government minister responsible for dismantling social gains, called the workers "stupid" (having previously described the women who work in slaughterhouses in Brittany as "illiterate"), Valls labeled them as "thugs," implicitly evoking the racist image of dark-skinned delinquents in the *banlieues* [minority and working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of big cities]. The widespread reliance on surveillance cameras to identify the alleged perpetrators also demonstrates the extent to which the strengthening of the police state in the name of the "war on terror" in reality serves to facilitate repression targeting the working class.

Le Bolchévik

Reuters

Above: Workers demonstrate in Paris on October 22 in defense of Air France strikers arrested after managers including Xavier Broseta (right, without shirt) fled from furious workers at October 5 airport rally.

Down With Vigipirate!

That is why we have always opposed the "war on terror," a political pretext for racist witchhunts against Muslims aimed at gaining acceptance for the use of police-state measures against everyone. In 2006, we vigorously protested the withdrawal by the police of security clearance for 72 baggage handlers at Roissy Airport—tantamount to firing them—simply because they were suspected of being devout Muslims and thus, according to the cops, potential "terrorists." The influx of this layer of workers of North and West African origin from the 93rd district [a heavily working-class and immigrant region outside Paris] had helped reinvigorate the CGT [General Confederation of Labor] and other unions. As we explained at the time, this was the real reason for the anti-terrorist hysteria (*Le Bolchévik* No. 178, December 2006). We added:

> "The obstacle is not lack of militancy: it is a political question which the trade-union bureaucrats are incapable of seriously addressing. The fight for the undocumented is acceptable to the 'left-leaning' bourgeois republicans courted by the reformists, as it is compatible with declarations about France being 'the country of human rights' and the 'land of political asylum.' But fighting against the oppression of workers and youth from the *banlieues*, most of whom have French citizenship, requires confronting racial oppression, which is rooted in French capitalism and is aimed against a whole layer of the working class whose parents or grandparents came from North and sub-Saharan Africa."

Exactly ten years after the revolt of the *banlieues* and several months after the racist anti-Muslim "I am Charlie" campaign, it is more important than ever to mobilize the working class in defense of its North African and African brothers and children. This is key for ensuring working-class unity against the bosses, especially at the Paris airports where the working class is multiethnic and multiracial.

This perspective cannot emerge spontaneously from the economic struggle of workers against the bosses. It requires the intervention of a revolutionary workers party placing itself at the head of the struggle against all forms of oppression targeting specific layers of the population, whether because of skin color, supposed ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation. *The workers movement must defend the banlieue youth! Down with Vigipirate and Sentinelle! Down with the racist "war on terror!"* This position represents a fundamental difference between ourselves and most of the left, notably the French Communist Party (PCF) and Lutte Ouvrière (LO). In 25 years, the latter has barely uttered a single word against Vigipirate! [Vigipirate and Sentinelle are police and military "anti-terrorism" mobilizations, the former to sow terror in minority neighborhoods and to patrol transportation hubs, the latter to guard places of worship, schools and other "sensitive" sites.]

It is necessary to fight racial discrimination in hiring and on the job, and to fight for the direct hiring of subcontracted, temporary and other workers without job security by the large companies where unions still exist. No to working 100 extra unpaid hours! For a reduction in working hours and the sharing of work among all, with no loss in pay! This poses the need to overthrow the whole capitalist system.

For Working-Class Unity! One Industry, One Union!

The airline industry in France is a sector in which the divisions among workers fostered by the bosses and their reformist agents have been pushed to the limit, in direct proportion to the social power these workers have. Not only are there racial divisions between white male pilots and dark-skinned workers, with flight attendants somewhere in between, but the unions are also divided according to political tendency (SUD, CGT, FO, etc.), and along craft lines (unions reserved for pilots or for flight attendants, sometimes within the same union federation, as in the case of SUD Aérien and Alter, "the pilot union").

Among the flight crews, some have also been threatened for allegedly opening the door through which the Air France workers entered the October 5 meeting. While they have been spared prosecution for the time being, this is only in order to pit ground workers against flight crews, while browbeating the latter into accepting 100 extra hours of work per year, to the absolute detriment of passenger safety.

With the help of the trade-union bureaucracy, Air France has turned the fomenting of these divisions into an art form, trying to convince ground personnel that their misfortunes are due to the exorbitant privileges flight crews are supposedly clinging to. For their part, many flight personnel think they are strong because they have their own craft unions based upon their specific interests. In reality, this thinking opens them up to all kinds of maneu-

Getty

Frankfurt Airport, November 6: Lufthansa flight crew on strike. International workers solidarity is key to successful class struggle.

LE BOLCHEVIK 4

Les dirigeants européens resserrent l'étau sur l'immigration

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(continued from page 1)

the unemployed at union wages. But satisfying human needs runs counter to the system of capitalism, where production and employment are determined by what is profitable. The truth is that the American rulers view the homeless as a financial burden, not worth the money to keep them alive. To reorganize society to serve the mass of humanity will require a new ruling class—the workers.

In September, Democratic mayor Eric Garcetti and several L.A. City Council members declared a state of emergency in response to the surge in homelessness, promising to allocate up to $100 million to the problem. Months later, there's no plan and no money. "Every few years, elected officials declare a crisis in homelessness or housing and pledge to spend millions of dollars or to pass new laws to address the chronic shortage of affordable homes," the *Los Angeles Times* observed in a 28 October editorial, but "promised public funding dries up or gets diverted to new crises." The city currently allocates more than $100 million a year for the homeless, but tellingly, much of that is spent on cop crackdowns.

This summer, two new city ordinances empowered the city to seize and destroy the belongings of homeless people that are left in parks or on sidewalks for over 24 hours. Another $3.7 million went to pay sanitation workers to help the cops haul away all the possessions of homeless people. Rather than allowing its members to be used as cops' auxiliaries, SEIU Local 721, which organizes sanitation workers and has come under attack from the city administration, has an interest in defending the homeless.

Criminalized for having no place to live, the homeless are regularly harassed and arrested by the police, fined for sleeping on the sidewalk, jaywalking or dropping cigarette ash. In the past year alone, as protests over the killings of blacks and Latinos swept the country, L.A. cops killed several homeless men (see "LAPD Guns Down Homeless Man," *WV* No. 1064, 20 March).

WV Photo

Homeless encampment in downtown L.A., October.

Recent police terror has aimed at driving the homeless out of sight as Garcetti prepares his bid to host the 2024 Olympics. The Olympic plan includes developing a rail yard along the concrete-lined L.A. River for an Olympic Village to house 16,500 athletes. Real estate developers are drooling at the prospect—and the likelihood that they will be able to buy up the area at a discount afterward for upscale development.

L.A.'s real estate moguls—heirs of those who built their empires on land and water grabs in the late 19th century—created the city's housing crisis in their quest for profits. In the early 1950s, they defeated L.A.'s plans for public housing through a racist campaign against potential integration and "creeping socialism." The giant developers and landlords have benefited handsomely from government regulations passed in the '70s that tightly restricted the construction of housing and drove up prices. L.A. County's housing stock grew only 20 percent between 1980 and 2010, while the population increased by a third.

Over the past two decades, rising housing costs have led many black people to move from L.A. to the historically white, segregated suburbs. By 2006, thousands of black recipients of Section 8 housing subsidies had moved to Lancaster and Palmdale in Antelope Valley, about 70 miles north of the city, where they were met with a racist backlash. Aiming to drive black people out of town, armed sheriff's deputies, sometimes nine at a time, conducted surprise searches of Section 8 rentals, looking for petty violations such as marijuana possession. As a result, more than 350 families lost their housing vouchers and some became homeless. City officials' calls to "wage war" on Section 8 families they branded as "criminals" and "security threats" incited further racist attacks. In 2010, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Palmdale was firebombed, and black families' properties were defaced with racist graffiti. This July, the L.A. County Housing Authority and Antelope Valley officials were found guilty of racial discrimination against hundreds of Section 8 voucher holders, only five of whom have had their subsidies reinstated.

The soaring rents, low wages and high unemployment driving the explosion in homelessness threaten the whole of the working class. An effective fight to reverse the long decline in wages and living conditions must include struggling against the oppression of the black population. The capitalist class uses racism to keep the working class divided and drive down wages and living conditions for all workers. Such a fight also requires defense of immigrant workers, regardless of their legal status, against deportation and discrimination. The strength of the working class lies in its ability to shut down profit at the point of production through unified struggle.

This is counter to the perspective of the labor tops in L.A., historically a viciously anti-union town. In the face of decades of attacks by city administrations, the union bureaucrats have refused to mobilize their ranks. Instead, they have pursued a losing strategy of lobbying the capitalist Democratic Party and appealing to the good conscience of the bosses. The City Council's vote to raise the minimum wage to $15 (by 2020!) is falsely presented as proof of the success of their efforts. A higher minimum wage is good as far as it goes. But, by the union bureaucrats' own admission, $15 an hour is not enough to survive on without public assistance. It's well below the $33 an hour that the California Housing Partnership says is needed to afford an average L.A. apartment. Outrageously, Rusty Hicks, head of the AFL-CIO's Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, pushed for an exemption allowing unionized workers to be paid *less than* the new minimum wage! (See "How Low Can You Go," *WV* No. 1071, 10 July.)

Under capitalism, workers, minorities and the poor can be used, abused or thrown away like garbage in the capitalist drive to maximize profits. But the working class has the potential to do more than simply eke out a living in the bonds of wage slavery. Under the leadership of its own revolutionary party, the working class can sweep away all the barbarity of class society and begin to construct a new, socialist order. As we wrote in "LAPD Guns Down Homeless Man":

> "In just one night, a revolutionary workers government would requisition living space from fancy hotels and the mansions of the rich—put the homeless in the Wilshire Grand Hotel, Beverly Hills and the Pacific Palisades! By ripping the productive forces out of the hands of the capitalist parasites and establishing a planned, centralized economy that serves the interests of society as a whole, the victorious working class will be able to provide a decent life for all."■

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vers by management to isolate them from other workers, thus allowing for them to be defeated separately instead of winning together.

The struggle against the threat of layoffs requires a struggle for working-class unity in a single industrial union, encompassing *all* Air France workers, along with baggage handlers and runway personnel at the Paris airports, as well as their coworkers at EasyJet, Lufthansa or Qatar Airways. Such a union cannot be forged through high-level negotiations between the bureaucratic apparatuses of the different unions, who line up separately at the feeding trough offered by the bosses. What is necessary is a struggle to oust all these bureaucrats and forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions!

An industrial union with such a leadership would be a powerful counterweight to the "company spirit" at Air France, where workers are supposed to be sincerely concerned about the health of the company—meaning its profitability for shareholders! It would also counter the propaganda condemning the government for giving priority to sales of weapons and Airbus aircraft to Persian Gulf countries in exchange for additional landing slots for airlines based in the Arabian Peninsula at the expense of Air France. This is a sort of protectionism that weakens the workers here by undermining the possibilities for international solidarity action by workers in other countries.

Air transportation is by definition an international activity. The true ally of the workers is not the "Air France" banner, but the pilots, baggage handlers and maintenance workers in other companies and other countries. ***Workers of all countries, unite!*** For Air France workers, solidarity with Lufthansa workers (whose latest strike against similar attacks earlier this year was simply banned by Germany's capitalist courts), or with Qatar Airways

Demotix

March in Paris to commemorate victims of racist cop terror, October 31. Banner reads: "Our neighborhoods are not shooting ranges."

workers (whom [Air France-KLM CEO Alexandre] de Juniac is only too happy to see imprisoned for the most minor offenses), would be the best preparation for a victorious strike at Air France.

Down With the European Union! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Before [President François] Hollande and Valls, it was another "left" capitalist government, with a PCF minister of transportation (Jean-Claude Gayssot), which initiated the privatization of Air France at the end of the 1990s. The government is currently allowing market competition to penetrate France, not because it is following orders from Berlin, but because in the name of the [European Union's] "Brussels Directives," the bosses here seek to increase the overall pressure on all workers in this country. They want to extend the anti-union regime of the low-cost airlines to everyone (e.g. the Transavia project at Air France) and thus increase the rate of capitalist profit.

The European Union (EU) is an unstable alliance of imperialist powers (of which France is second behind Germany) and of weaker countries. This alliance is directed against these countries' own working classes, against the U.S. and Japan, and against immigrants trying to enter "Fortress Europe." We have always opposed the European Union on an *internationalist* basis. The support of LO, the PCF and the New Anti-Capitalist Party for the EU and the euro merely reflects the current pro-EU position of their own bourgeoisie. It also gives the fascists of the National Front an opening to expand their influence among the most backward sectors of the working class by posing as the only major party that opposes the single currency currently choking European economies. *Down with the capitalist EU and its financial instrument, the euro! For a Socialist United States of Europe!*

These days, airports are highly militarized areas. Any serious class struggle immediately comes up against the armed gangs of the capitalist government. In 1993, under [Socialist president François] Mitterrand, Air France workers defied the law and order of the government of [conservative Edouard] Balladur (the spiritual father of [right-wing president Nicolas] Sarkozy) and won on the battlefield by occupying the runways. A few strikebreakers may even have lost their shirts there. But the workers' victory was betrayed by the union bureaucrats, who subsequently handed everything back to the bosses at the negotiating table.

The profound irrationality of the capitalist system is especially glaring when it comes to the airline industry. To put an end to capitalist competition and the laws of profit requires nothing less than a socialist revolution to establish a workers government that will overthrow the entire capitalist system and expropriate the bourgeoisie. The extension of the revolution throughout Europe will enable a socialist reconstruction of society based on rational, international planning of production according to what is needed, including for transportation.

In order to score a decisive victory over the capitalists, their cops and judges, their media propagandists and their agents within the workers movement itself, the working class needs a revolutionary workers party. The Russian Revolution of October 1917, in which the workers conquered power for the first time, showed the way. Following the model of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, we fight to build the French section of a reforged Fourth International, the party of world socialist revolution.■

Greece: For Workers Struggle Against Austerity!

We print below the second part of a presentation, edited for publication, given by Spartacist League spokesman Diana Coleman at an October 10 forum in Oakland, California. Part One appeared in WV *No. 1077 (30 October).*

PART TWO

Reuters

Protest against capitalist austerity in Thessaloniki, Greece's second city, September 5.

Syriza, which came to power in Greece for the first time following elections this January, had been formed some years earlier as a coalition including bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces—from environmentalists and bourgeois populists to anti-Soviet splits from the Communist Party of Greece. Syriza's name translates as "Coalition of the Radical Left," but don't be fooled. From the start, it was actually a petty-bourgeois populist party with a pro-capitalist program. In government, Syriza became an outright bourgeois party.

In the January elections, there were real illusions in Syriza among Greek workers and the oppressed. Many thought Syriza would stand up to the European Union (EU) imperialists who were treating the country as practically a German colony. The enthusiasm was huge, including on the left. Numerous pseudo-socialist groups joined Syriza's big "national unity" rallies in Athens and hailed its coming to power.

Indeed, many of these groups were already inside Syriza, serving as foot soldiers for this capitalist party. Other leftists, including assorted Maoists and pseudo-Trotskyists, were in Antarsya, a coalition that ran its own candidates in the election but sought to be the pressure on the streets that would push Syriza a little to the left. Here are a couple of examples of the left internationally cheering on Syriza. The former United Secretariat, centered on the French New Anti-Capitalist Party, called to elect Syriza under the headline, "On 25 January, A Turning Point for Greece and Europe!" (internationalviewpoint.org, 12 January). The Committee for a Workers International, whose U.S. affiliate is Socialist Alternative, claimed that a Syriza victory "will have a liberating effect on the working class, the movements and society in general" (socialistworld.net, 20 January).

In sharp contrast, our comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece denounced Syriza in a leaflet distributed to workers on May Day:

> "Syriza has always been committed to preserving the capitalist system and for continuing Greece's membership in the EU and euro zone. This means submitting to the purpose of the EU, which is to maximize capitalist profit by driving down the working and living conditions of workers and the oppressed throughout all of Europe, including in imperialist countries like Germany. It also means making working people pay for the debts racked up by the capitalists and their bloodsucking banks. It is not only the imperialists, ***but also the Greek capitalist class*** who have benefited from the EU's destruction of labor rights and imposition of austerity."
>
> —reprinted as "Syriza Is Class Enemy of Workers!" *WV* No. 1068, 15 May

After the elections, Syriza formed a coalition with the right-wing nationalist Independent Greeks (this coalition is gross, but not really surprising) and began imposing various austerity measures while trying to wheel and deal with the EU. But the European Union wasn't into making deals. In late June, the "Troika"—the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)—demanded even more brutal attacks. Under pressure from the imperialists and the Greek capitalists—who claimed that Greece faced total ruin if it did not get yet another "bailout"—Syriza organized a referendum on the latest austerity package. Syriza called for a "no" vote, with the declared intent of utilizing the outcome to pressure the EU for more favorable conditions. In fact, according to multiple reports from Syriza insiders, the party's leadership secretly expected, and hoped, that the referendum result would be "yes," giving them an excuse to implement the austerity while pretending to have a popular mandate. You know, along the lines of, "What can we do? We didn't like the bailout terms, but the people have spoken."

But it didn't work that way. More than 60 percent of the voters, including millions of working people, responded with a decisive "NO!" Naturally, the TGG called for a "no" vote in the referendum, in which was posed a simple question: "yes" or "no" to the Troika's austerity plan. Not complicated! To do otherwise than to vote "no" would have been a betrayal. The TGG statement on the referendum also called for opposition to the EU and no support to the Syriza government. It should be noted that many Greek people, although angered by the austerity, are reluctant or fearful of leaving the EU, in no small part due to the bourgeois propaganda offensive identifying such a step with even greater disaster.

Demotix

German chancellor Angela Merkel with Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras at EU summit in Brussels, October 15.

What was in the austerity package (the Memorandum) that people voted down? Some details are necessary to get a proper picture. It hiked the regressive VAT (sales tax), further slashed pensions and ripped up union contracts. Many more will go hungry as a result of the 23 percent VAT. As for pensions, the bourgeois press is always talking about lavish retirement. What a lie! Pensions on average have *already* been cut by almost 45 percent since 2008, and now the rulers are going to cut them more! Today, about 45 percent of retirees receive pensions below what is considered the poverty line in a country in which 20 percent of the population is over 65, and by some estimates, half of the households rely on pensions to make ends meet. With youth unemployment so high, that's not surprising.

More cuts mean more homelessness and starvation. A *Guardian* article (21 January) on Greece described: "Mamas and papas scavenging through the rubbish bins, the broken pavements and shuttered shops, the abandoned cars and derelict houses, the new poor who mutter to themselves on graffiti-stained streets." Our comrades reported that in what used to be working-class areas of the port city of Piraeus they now see malnourished old people and a lot of fascist graffiti.

For Workers Action Committees!

Although German chancellor Angela Merkel rants about the Greek government's supposed profligate spending, there is a whole other side to the matter: the money that German imperialism makes off exports, including arms sales, to Greece. The *Guardian* (19 April 2012) a couple years ago quoted Dimitris Papadimoulis, a Syriza member of parliament: "If there is one country that has benefited from the huge amounts Greece spends on defence it is Germany." The *Guardian* went on, "No other area has contributed as heavily to the country's debt mountain. If Athens had cut defence spending to levels similar to other EU states over the past decade, economists claim it would have saved around €150bn—more than its last bailout."

Furthermore, a lot of the military hardware didn't even work: "The former defence minister Akis Tsochadzopoulos was jailed pending trial on charges of accepting an €8m bribe from Ferrostaal, the German company that helped oversee the scandal-marred sale of four Class 214 submarines to the Greek navy 12 years ago. To date, Athens has taken delivery of only one of the subs after the vessels were found to have technical glitches." And more: "Speculation is rife that international aid was dependent on Greece following through on agreements to buy military hardware from Germany and France." In other words, the German and French imperialists make the big money while the Greek capitalists, in pursuit of their own interests, get bribes that they stash in Swiss bank accounts. And through it all, the masses starve.

As part of the punishing "bailout" of Greece, the EU has demanded reorganization of the judiciary and government administration, dictating every aspect of economic, social welfare and labor policy. Public assets are to be placed in a trust fund administered by Greece's imperialist creditors, with the aim of selling them off mainly to pay debts and recapitalize the banks. *Time* magazine (16 July) listed some of what is expected to be sold:

> "REAL ESTATE. Greece has already begun selling off landmark buildings, including neoclassical Culture Ministry offices in Athens, and has leased two of the capital's ancient sites to private companies. According to the IMF, Greece

AP

Greece's then prime minister Antonis Samaras boarding new Class 214 submarine bought from Germany, at Skaramanga shipyards, near Athens, October 2014.

ELIA

Archives of Socr Pontikopoulos

Left: Leaders of Greek Communist Party-led National Liberation Front sign treacherous Varkiza treaty, 12 February 1945, ending uprising in Athens and mandating disarmament (right) of People's Liberation Army.

> has over 70,000 unused properties that could be sold, but Greek officials insist significant treasures like the Acropolis won't be put on the market."

We'll see! *Time* continued: .

> "ISLANDS: Greece has anywhere from 1,200 to 6,000 islands, an estimated 227 of which are inhabited...; private islands are already selling for as little as $3 million.
>
> "PORTS: Plans to sell off stakes in the Port of Piraeus, Greece's largest harbor and its major shipping hub for over 2,500 years, are well under way.... The government is also likely to sell off stakes in 14 airports."

The fact that German banks will determine what Greek assets will be sold off to repay the debt to German (and French) banks demonstrates that there is an element of national oppression at work here.

The Greek masses voted against such measures in the July 5 referendum, but just one week later, Syriza totally capitulated. Party leader Alexis Tsipras announced the acceptance of even more draconian austerity than was rejected in the referendum—which is fairly hard to imagine. Shock and anger rippled throughout Greek society. The task of the hour was to unite the working masses in struggle against the attacks of the imperialists, their Greek lackeys and the Syriza government.

Seeking to act as a struck flint to ignite proletarian struggle, the TGG issued a call for workers action committees "composed of workers from different tendencies and their allies—youth, unemployed, immigrants, pensioners" to fight to repudiate the EU and euro and to cancel the debt; for workers defense guards against the fascist threat; for workers control of food distribution and prices; to expropriate the banks, utilities, transportation, ports and shipping industry, among other demands (see "Enough!" *WV* No. 1072, 7 August). On the other side stand the Golden Dawn fascists who, especially in the absence of such struggle, seek to take advantage of Syriza's sellout to its EU masters with appeals to the ruined petty bourgeoisie and masses of unemployed youth.

The TGG's call for workers action committees was an application of the tactic of the united front. Appealing for workers from different tendencies to join such committees was an attempt to use our small forces as a lever for broader, defensive struggle by the proletariat and its allies. If formed, such committees would be arenas for vital debates on the way forward involving the different parties that claim to represent the workers' interests. Such debates are key to forging a revolutionary workers party, the necessary instrument to lead the working class to power.

Our call provoked real debate and interest, even though it was somewhat slow going into August when many people left Athens and other cities to go on vacation in the countryside. Some Greek Communist Party (KKE) members argued that they were already handing out free food in poor areas, i.e., interpreting the TGG call as an appeal for social work. In fact, our call for workers *control* of food distribution and prices goes far beyond social work; it runs up against the limits of what is "legal" under capitalist rule. As my mother always told me, "The best things in life are illegal, immoral or fattening." And when it comes to unions and class struggle, everything effective is usually illegal. Many of the demands we put forward cannot be met under capitalism—we want workers to learn in struggle that capitalism must go.

The KKE's Class Collaboration

I want to spend some time on the KKE, which supported the Stalinist bureaucracy who ran the Soviet workers state after usurping political power from the proletariat beginning in 1923-24. The bureaucratic misrulers betrayed the liberating and internationalist goals that animated the October 1917 Russian Revolution, which was led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Instead, they pushed the bankrupt idea that there could be socialism in a single, relatively backward country, combined with "peaceful coexistence" with the capitalist-imperialist world.

These class-collaborationist politics led to defeat of the Communist-led workers and peasants in the Greek Civil War of the 1940s. The KKE had established itself at the head of Greece's anti-Nazi resistance, which had the run of the country when the German forces withdrew. But like Stalinists elsewhere, the KKE leadership sought to subordinate workers' struggles to the "progressive" bourgeoisie, joining the capitalist government and, in February 1945, signing the Treaty of Varkiza that disarmed the resistance fighters and handed power back to the miserable Greek bourgeoisie.

Believe me, the Civil War still looms large in Greece today. If you go to a bar and begin talking about the war, people will start to lecture you about what happened to their grandmother, etc., etc. And heaven help you if you bring the subject up at a family dinner—the war divided families and is an issue that arouses screaming and stomping out of rooms. Besides our article "Greece 1940s: A Revolution Betrayed" (*Spartacist* No. 64, Summer 2014), which provides a revolutionary Trotskyist analysis of the Greek Civil War, there is a worthwhile documentary available on YouTube titled *Greece: The Hidden War*. The video includes interviews of Greek KKEers, some of whom are critical of their leadership.

To this day, the KKE is a mass party that has the allegiance of a crucial core of the Greek working class. When I saw the KKE marching through Athens with the unions that they lead, tens of thousands of workers were in the streets, and they had marshals around the perimeter of the march. Impressive looking, but they don't use the evident power of these workers, refusing, for example, to mobilize the workers to stop the fascists.

As the TGG wrote in a leaflet explaining our critical support to the KKE in the 2012 elections, "Vote KKE! No Vote to Syriza!" (printed in *WV* No. 1005, 6 July 2012), "Rather than mobilizing workers and immigrants against Golden Dawn, which represents a threat to the whole of the organized working class, the KKE appeals for votes from among the same backward layers of the population who voted for the fascist scum, demanding: 'The working people who voted for Golden Dawn must correct their vote'." Such statements are revolting, especially coming from a group that has the social weight to spearhead struggles to stop Golden Dawn. Sometimes, the KKE argues that fascism will only *finally* be gotten rid of after the revolution. Well, true enough, but that does not mean that you shouldn't mobilize against the fascists now. History has shown that you better stop the fascists when you can.

Today, the KKE fights not for socialist revolution but for "people's power," which disappears the centrality of the proletariat, which uniquely has the social power to wage the necessary fight against capitalism. It obscures the fact that the central class division in capitalist society is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and *not* between the "people" and the "monopolies." The American variant is the "anti-monopoly coalition" pushed by the Communist Party USA and endorsed by most reformists. It's simply a disguised way of saying that you should unite with everyone who is to the left of Donald Trump and the piggish owners of Wal-Mart. Once leftists start talking about "the people," watch out—it's the open door to opportunism.

Trotskyist Group of Greece

Stalinist treachery today: At July 2 rally, KKE banner calls on working people to spoil ballots in referendum on EU austerity measures.

Macedonia: Litmus Test for Greek Left

The KKE is also profoundly nationalist, viewing as sacred the Greek borders, which were extended a hundred years ago through a series of wars. Echoing the Greek bourgeoisie, the KKE last year railed against "a conscious effort to promote Turkish national consciousness in the Muslim minority and a so-called 'Macedonian' national consciousness among a section of the Slavic-speakers." In 2013, the KKE newspaper ran an article calling to strengthen the war industries in the name of national defense.

I want to tell a story from my second trip to Greece, in 2010. There had been something like eight general strikes that year—two happened while I was there. Since general strikes in the U.S. are very rare (to put it mildly), I was eager to attend one of the strike marches and went to observe it at Syntagma Square, the plaza in front of the Greek parliament. At first, the demo proceeded as I expected. Mostly male, middle-aged trade unionists filed in to the square with banners showing they were electrical workers, postal workers and so on. Suddenly, a man was chasing another man, knocking him roughly to the ground and kicking him. Then, an older woman came running by with blood streaming down her head. There was a lot of running hither and thither. Cops on motorcycles and in riot gear with clubs out began to arrive en masse. The petty-bourgeois people who had been sitting in the nearby cafes began to throw money down on the tables and quickly leave the area.

I felt like I had been transported into that classic Costa-Gavras movie *Z*. Not able to get to the Metro station because there were so many cops blocking it, I just began to walk away from the demo. Parenthetically, according to later news reports, this incident apparently involved an attack on Pakistani immigrants, which some trade unionists stepped in to stop.

In any case, I found myself walking next to a guy in his late 20s or early 30s. He spoke English and told me that he was from Skopje, which is how Greeks refer to the existing country of Macedonia. Knowing that, I said, "Oh, Macedonia." He was greatly impressed and began telling me about the oppression of the Macedonian minority within the borders of Greece today. He spoke about how it was once illegal for Macedonians in Greece to speak their language and how his family had been forced from its home and lost its land. He also spoke about how the Greek government had moved Greeks into certain areas of Macedonia (that were incorporated into Greece a century ago) because they would be more loyal to the government. He told me that Macedonians were Slavs and that he could always tell the difference on sight between Greeks and Slavs (which I certainly couldn't).

continued on page 8

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Greece...

(continued from page 7)

Finally, he gave me a capsule summary of the Greek Civil War from the Macedonian point of view. He said that the Macedonians supported the KKE in the Civil War and that the Greek ruling class has never forgiven them and never will. I found the conversation interesting and, in a small way, a vindication of our position in defense of the national rights of Macedonians in Greece. At the end, he escorted me to the Metro station and we shook hands.

For the ICL, the fight against national chauvinism has always been key. As noted in the 2004 "Agreement for Common Work Between Greek Comrades and the ICL (FI)": "A Trotskyist group in Greece must fight against Greek chauvinism and defend the rights of national minorities." This understanding is central to our fight for a socialist federation of the Balkans as the only way to resolve the many national questions in the region.

The KKE's Referendum Betrayal

Despite its name and some of its rhetoric, the KKE manifestly does not have the program and perspective needed to lead the workers to sweep away capitalism. There is a profound contradiction between its nationalist, reformist politics and its working-class base. Authentic Marxists seek to reach out to these workers with the objective of forging a revolutionary party through a process of common struggle, political debate, splits, fusions and regroupments.

During the 2012 elections and again in January this year, the TGG gave critical support to the KKE. Why? Because the Communist Party opposed forming a coalition with Syriza or any bourgeois party, while also opposing the EU. Our critical support allowed us to underline the need for class independence from all capitalist forces. And it also allowed us to gain a hearing for our views among the ranks of the KKE.

But in the referendum this July, the KKE committed an outrageous betrayal, calling on working people to throw away their votes by casting invalid ballots. The party leaders claimed a "no" vote would be an indirect vote for Syriza's alternate austerity plan, but that was completely false. The ballot simply said "yes" or "no" to the EU Memorandum. The "no" vote was nothing other than a slap in the face to the EU and IMF imperialists. The KKE leaders' refusal to champion a "no" vote stood in total contradiction to the KKE's declared opposition to the EU. In fact, many KKE militants didn't listen to their leaders and voted "no" anyway, which is a good thing.

The overwhelming "no" vote on the referendum and the Syriza leadership's subsequent sellout served to destabilize the Greek government. Tsipras resigned as Prime Minister and called new elections for September 20. Syriza was re-elected, but with the lowest ever voter turnout.

The TGG wrote an Open Letter to the KKE explaining that we weren't going to give them critical support in the September election unless they repudiated their wretched position on the referendum. The letter stated: "We wonder comrades, have you considered that the victory of the 'no' vote weakened and irreparably exposed Syriza in the eyes of the masses who had in fact been deceived before the election? Is this fact not in the interests of the working class? Have you considered comrades that had the 'yes' camp won, Syriza and the EU would have had a *mandate* to devastate the working class not only in Greece but throughout Europe?" (icl-fi.org, 13 September). I consider this letter a very effective piece of propaganda.

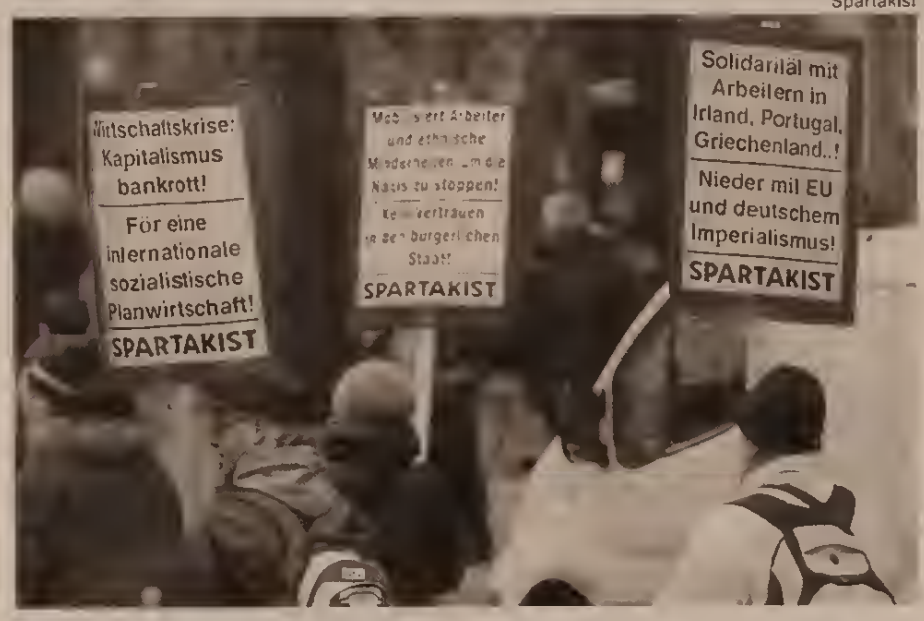
While the KKE's percentage of the vote did not change much, the high level of abstention meant it lost considerable electoral support—more than 35,000 votes—compared to January. As the only mass working-class alternative to Syriza, the KKE could have capitalized on the widespread disillusionment with the government. Instead, it reaped what it sowed with its referendum betrayal.

The September elections also saw the emergence of a split from Syriza called Popular Unity. This latest bourgeois-populist front is trying to salvage the anti-austerity banner that Syriza so quickly trampled on. The future leaders of Popular Unity stayed inside the Syriza government until Tsipras stepped down, showing that they are devoted to maintaining capitalist stability and that their vote in parliament against the latest "bailout" terms was just for show. We, of course, opposed on principle any vote to Popular Unity, which did very poorly in the election, falling below the 3 percent threshold necessary for parliamentary deputies.

AP

TGG leaflet (above) for July 5 referendum said: "Vote NO! Down With the EU! No Support to the Syriza Government!" Below: German Spartacists call for solidarity with workers across Europe and say, "Down With the EU and German Imperialism!" January 2013.

Spartakist



Having learned nothing at all, the reformist left groups that so recently hailed Syriza quickly turned to hailing Popular Unity. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) ran an interview with one of its Greek co-thinkers under the headline "The Struggle for Syriza's Soul." Typical! The Greek supporters of the ISO (the DEA) and other pseudo-socialist groups simply decamped from Syriza to join Popular Unity. To paraphrase a comment made by Trotsky in a different context, this isn't just a betrayal; it's a farce.

The EU is happy with the September election results. The *Guardian* (21 September) commented:

> "EU officials reacted to the news with thinly disguised comfort. Tsipras, for so long the bad boy of European politics, had only reluctantly accepted the excoriating conditions attached to the financial assistance programme. Before what is expected to be an explosive winter, EU sources said it was better the leftist was in government, applying policies, than potentially rabble rousing on the streets. 'There is a certain amount of relief in that,' said one EU insider."

This appraisal reminds me of the famous statement by New York City's first black mayor, David Dinkins, who said of the workers and black people facing massive cuts to social programs, "They'll take it from me." The EU hopes the Greek workers and oppressed will take it from Tsipras.

But as the *Guardian* (20 September) also noted: "The turnout was low and the mood sullen." Our comrades reported considerable frustration and disillusionment with all the existing parties, frustration that could be channeled in any number of directions. A common refrain was, "Why bother voting when all the decisions are being made in Germany and Brussels [where the EU has its headquarters]?" There is, for now, an ebb in struggle, but new rounds of popular resistance will erupt once the latest EU-imposed starvation diktats begin to take hold.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Recent events have made completely clear that it is impossible for Greece to break the spiral of debt and imperialist pillage so long as it remains within the EU and its eurozone. Twice in the past century, in the interimperialist World Wars I and II, Germany's capitalist rulers sought to "unite" Europe under their dominance through force of arms. They failed. Today the goal hasn't changed, only the means: they seek dominance through economic levers, including by controlling the common European currency.

A debtor country can sometimes gain some breathing room and establish a modicum of economic competitiveness by repudiating its debt and devaluing its currency. But there is no such option under the euro. The European imperialists, echoed by the Greek capitalists, say: if you try to leave the eurozone, then Armageddon awaits. In fact, there are examples of debt default and currency devaluation that have not been disasters (Argentina and Iceland come to mind). Going this route did not free those countries from the ravages of the imperialist global order—which cannot happen within the framework of capitalism—but it did eventually allow for something of an economic recovery.

More importantly, Greece leaving the EU and the eurozone would create better conditions for the working class to struggle. Our opposition to these institutions is based on the interests of the international working class. If Greece left the EU, it would be a blow to the very existence of this reactionary bloc. It also could make it clearer to the Greek workers that their most immediate enemies are their own capitalist rulers, not Brussels or the German bankers.

As I said earlier, our perspective is that of the class struggle, including common class struggle of Greek, German and other European workers against their respective capitalist rulers and the EU. Since the destruction of the Soviet Union, the consciousness and level of struggle of the working class internationally has taken a big step backward. But this situation will not last forever. The workings of capitalism don't just produce daily misery; they will spur further working-class combativity. Greece today is a weak point in the global capitalist order. The stakes there are high: the next round of grinding austerity could well push the fascists to the fore, as happened in Germany in the early 1930s. But if the working class takes the lead, breaking with all the parties of the capitalist class, its struggles could serve as a beacon for the proletariat worldwide. Socialism or barbarism are the choices, as Rosa Luxemburg so famously commented.

Sixty years ago, American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon noted that we are living in "a transition period of the history of humanity." Cannon observed:

> "It is a mere interlude in the long evolution of the human race, but it has encompassed all our lives, and the lives of many generations. In this historical interlude, mankind, losing even the memory of its communal solidarity of earlier millenniums, has descended into the underworld of competitive class society in order to forge there the weapons for its liberation from helpless dependence on nature, and to create the material conditions for its re-emergence in the communal solidarity of classless society in the future."
>
> —"Joseph Vanzler," speech delivered in Los Angeles, 25 June 1956, printed in *Speeches for Socialism* (1971)

Only the struggles of a working class conscious of and confident in its historic tasks can give humanity such a future. From Greece to the U.S. and around the world, the goal of our organization is to re-implant the liberating ideals and the scientific program of communism among working people and the oppressed. We urge you to join us in this fight.■

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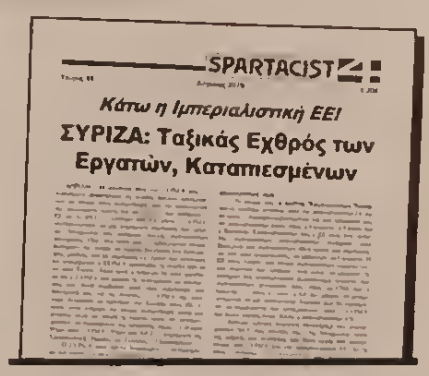

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TPP...

(continued from page 12)

TPP will cost "American" jobs, the AFL-CIO bureaucrats oppose the pact because it doesn't go far enough in creating a "strategic advantage over China" for U.S. capitalists. Against the China-bashing protectionism of the labor misleaders, which pits U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters internationally, our opposition to the TPP is based on opposition to our "own" imperialist rulers and our unconditional defense of the Chinese deformed workers state.

U.S. Imperialism's Loyal Labor Lieutenants

The AFL-CIO's treatise, "The U.S.-China Economic Relationship: The TPP is Not the Answer," blames China for "undercutting U.S. manufacturers and displacing millions of U.S. jobs" (aflcio.org, undated). In reality, the decline in U.S. manufacturing and the massacre of jobs, wages and social benefits are in the purest sense "made in the U.S.A." By tying the interests of workers to the profitability of their exploiters, the capitalist class's labor lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracy paved the way for these defeats. Rather than mobilizing labor's power in a fight against the decades-long onslaught against the unions, the labor misleaders argue that the workers must "sacrifice" in order to increase the competitive edge of U.S. capitalism against its rivals. One need look no further than the ravaged remains of the United Auto Workers (UAW), once the symbol of union power in this country, for the results of the bureaucrats' class collaboration.

Following World War II, the U.S. emerged as the dominant imperialist power in the world, its boasts of technological and productive superiority epitomized by the auto industry. By the 1960s, however, U.S. dominance was increasingly challenged by the rising economic might of West Germany and Japan. The industrial base in those countries, which had been destroyed in World War II, was replaced by new plants that were far more advanced. Faced with growing competition, the U.S. auto bosses responded with a concerted campaign to intensify the exploitation of labor through massive layoffs and giveback contracts. Beginning in the 1980s, production was increasingly moved from the unionized North and Midwest to the open shop South, as well as to Latin America and East Asia.

Obliging the bosses' demands for concessions in the name of "saving jobs," the UAW bureaucrats launched a chauvinist crusade to defend the Big Three against competing manufacturers. The racism at the heart of the UAW's "buy American" protectionism was demonstrated in the murder of a young Chinese American, Vincent Chin, who was bludgeoned to death in 1982 by a Chrysler foreman who thought he was Japanese and blamed him for "stealing American jobs." Meanwhile, non-union auto plants expanded as Japanese, German and South Korean manufacturers set up shop in the low-wage, open shop U.S. South in order to get around protectionist import restrictions.

In response, the UAW leadership has agreed to more and more concessions. While decrying "cheap labor" abroad, they helped create a pool of cheap labor in the union itself with the introduction of two-tier wages. Today, the UAW tops propose to fight the domestic "outsourcing" of union jobs to non-union auto supply plants with a program of "insourcing." To entice auto parts suppliers in the U.S. back under the Big Three umbrella, the bureaucrats are offering third-tier wages! Thus in the name of "defending union jobs" in the U.S., the trade-union misleaders operate as cutthroat labor contractors for the bosses.

Imaginechina

China's first domestically produced passenger jet, the C919, rolls off assembly line, November 2. Despite continuing material scarcity, Chinese workers state has made tremendous strides in industrial development.

This long string of betrayals is hardly peculiar to the UAW. The same processes have reduced the industrial unions in this country to a shadow of their former selves. The pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy looks for friends in the camp of the capitalist class enemy and sees enemies and competitors in the growing ranks of the proletariat in Latin America and Asia. In fact, workers in other countries are crucial *allies* in the fight against capitalist exploitation. If the unions are to be effective instruments of struggle against the bosses, they must break the chains forged by the labor traitors that have shackled the workers to their exploiters. That means ousting the red-white-and-blue bureaucrats and replacing them with a class-struggle leadership whose banner will be the red flag of proletarian internationalism. The struggle for such a leadership must be tied to forging the multiracial revolutionary workers party that can lead the proletariat to victory in the "final conflict" to end the predatory rule of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad.

Defend the Gains of the Chinese Revolution!

The anti-Communist AFL-CIO misleaders have a long track record of dirty work on behalf of the U.S. rulers. At the outset of the Cold War, the predecessors of today's labor sellouts purged the militants who led the CIO organizing battles. The AFL-CIO tops lent their services to the destruction of militant unions in Europe and Latin America, where they became known as the "AFL-CIA." In the 1980s, the union bureaucracy channeled millions of CIA dollars to Polish Solidarność, a reactionary movement masquerading as a trade union that spearheaded the drive for capitalist restoration in East Europe. Cut of the same cloth is the AFL-CIO's call for "free trade unions" in Vietnam, which, not surprisingly, is incorporated into the TPP.

Similarly, the labor misleaders echo their imperialist masters' complaints that the Chinese government subsidizes state-owned industries, controls its currency, limits competition from foreign imports and offers other countries beneficial trade and investment. Yet the things they decry as "unfair" reflect gains for the working class that were won through the 1949 Chinese Revolution which drove out the imperialists and overthrew capitalism.

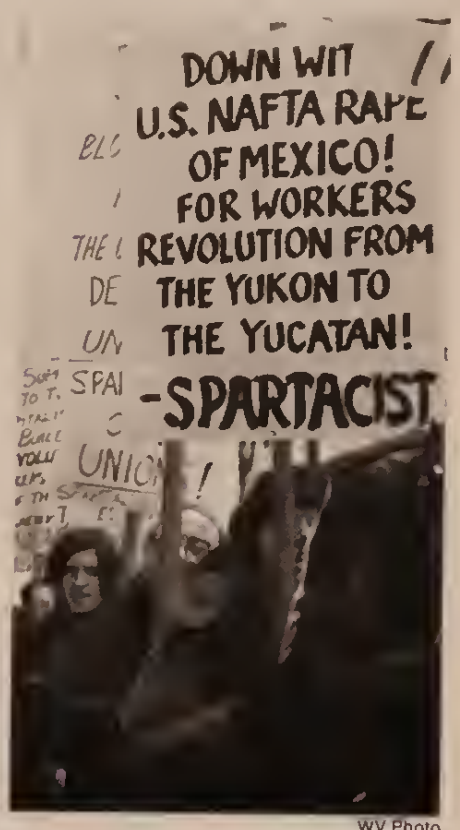
The core of the Chinese economy is collectivized, not privately owned by individual capitalist exploiters. State-owned enterprises dominate strategic industrial sectors, with much of the surplus they create channeled into the banks and treasury of the workers state. State control over China's currency, the yuan, has insulated the country from the volatile movements of money capital that have wreaked havoc around the world.

Testifying to the superiority of a collectivized economy over production for profit, China's economy continued to grow while the capitalist world was plunged into economic meltdown following the 2007-08 collapse of Wall Street's financial speculation. In the U.S., nine million jobs were destroyed, four million houses foreclosed on and pension funds were looted. Trillions of dollars went to bail out the banks, insurance companies and auto bosses. In contrast, China channeled massive investment into developing infrastructure and productive capacity.

The Chinese Revolution was a tremendous victory for the workers of the world. However, the workers state was deformed from birth by the rule of a nationalist bureaucracy modeled on the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Like their Kremlin counterparts before them, the rulers in Beijing oppose the perspective of international proletarian revolution. Thus they promoted the pipe dream of building "socialism in one country" and the equally delusional notion of "peaceful co-existence" with the imperialist powers. Although the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy's rule depends on the existence of the workers state it seeks to prosper and maintain its status through an accommodation to the imperialist order, much like the AFL-CIO bureaucracy in this country.

AP

China-bashing AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka (far right) with president and CEO of U.S. Chamber of Commerce Thomas Donohue, February 2014.



WV Photo

Spartacist supporters at February 2000 New York protest in defense of Mexican student strikers. Marxists oppose imperialist trade blocs.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), his analysis of the degeneration of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky observed of the bureaucracy in Soviet Russia:

> "To the extent that, in contrast to a decaying capitalism, it develops the productive forces, it is preparing the economic basis of socialism. To the extent that, for the benefit of an upper stratum, it carries to more and more extreme expression bourgeois norms of distribution, it is preparing a capitalist restoration."

Since the 1949 Revolution, China has gone from being a backward peasant country to a mostly urban one, lifting some 600 million people out of poverty and creating a powerful industrial proletariat. Nonetheless, China remains a country of extreme contradictions, with great backwardness and poverty, particularly in the countryside. In mainland China today,

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New York...

(continued from page 1)

effort proclaimed the "vital importance" of "saving a city of stable, integrated neighborhoods where people of ordinary means are permanently embedded." This lofty vision has zero reality, as is clear from a look at NYC schools, which are among the most segregated in the country. The relief offered to hard-pressed working people by de Blasio's housing scheme will prove just about as illusory.

The plan centers on "inclusionary zoning," by which a portion of new housing is to be offered to low- and middle-income earners at below market rate. In fact, it's a giant windfall for developers. Those who choose to build will be handsomely rewarded with tax breaks and other government subsidies. The developers previously raked it in under mogul-mayor Bloomberg's own inclusionary zoning policy. And to what effect? Units deemed affordable made up less than 2 percent of housing growth between 2005 and 2013, less than population growth. In San Francisco, similar regulations have not stopped rents from even surpassing those in New York.

De Blasio has set a target of 25 to 30 percent of new housing in rezoned areas to have affordable rents. Affordable for whom? Not the poor, that's for sure. Just 16,000 apartments for families making $42,000 and less would be created—*3 percent* of the actual need according to the city's own figures. True, some thousands of new apartments might be built with rents pegged for families squeaking by on $50,000 or $60,000 a year. At the same time, 100,000 market-rate apartments would be built in the same neighborhoods, displacing more working-class people—black, white, Latino and Asian—and accelerating the drive toward ever higher rents. De Blasio's plan would thus accelerate the process of driving workers from their homes, not least families concentrated in the ghettos and barrios. And the bodegas and car repair shops they rely on will be chewed up as well.

The program is to be launched in Brooklyn's East New York, Cypress Hills and Ocean Hill, where a mere 132 new units out of 6,000 are supposed to be set aside for people making less than $25,000 a year. The ghetto and barrio poor, then, are to stay stuck in their hovels. And maybe not even there for much longer. De Blasio proposes to build luxury high-rises on New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) parking lots and other "high value" land within housing projects. The purpose, supposedly, is to raise money to install working light bulbs, fix leaky roofs, replace gas-leaking stoves and supply heat in the winter. Brooklyn's Wyckoff Heights and the Upper East Side Holmes Towers in Manhattan have been selected for this scam because they are in already gentrified neighborhoods where two-bedroom units go for $3,000 or more a month. Public housing residents rightly fear that they will be driven out.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Demotix

Left: Picketers call for integration of all-white Stuyvesant Town housing development in Manhattan, July 1950. Above: Housing protest in Zuccotti Park, lower Manhattan, September.

Against those ostensible socialists who saw de Blasio's election as a victory for workers and the oppressed, we told the truth: "The hopes he has aroused are bound to be cruelly dashed. Whatever posture he takes today and whatever palliatives he may dole out, de Blasio as mayor will be charged with managing the finance capital of U.S. imperialism on behalf of the Wall Street plutocrats and real estate barons who run the city" ("De Blasio: Liberal Populist Face of Capitalist Politics," *WV* No. 1032, 18 October 2013). It is the labor misleaders' support to the Democratic Party that is the chief political obstacle to the militant class struggle that workers must wage to wrest even the slightest improvements in their conditions.

As the local capitalist chief executive, de Blasio is overseeing a problem as old as the system of production for profit. Nearly 150 years ago, Karl Marx's chief collaborator, Friedrich Engels, precisely described the housing problem as "a necessary product of the bourgeois social order...in which the great masses of the workers are exclusively dependent upon wages, that is to say, on the sum of foodstuffs necessary for their existence and for the propagation of their kind; in which improvements of the existing machinery continually throw masses of workers out of employment" (*The Housing Question*, 1872).

There is a simple way to overcome the housing crisis: make available the existing supply of livable quarters and build new places for people to live. But such a rational solution is held hostage to an economic system in which no ground is broken, no cement poured, no home occupied unless the pockets of the bankers, developers and landlords are stuffed. As Engels stressed, the housing shortage "can be abolished together with all its effects on health, etc., only if the whole social order from which it springs is fundamentally refashioned."

Got a Million?

So, what does it cost to live in NYC these days? The erstwhile ghetto of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn is among the most rapidly gentrifying areas of the city. Over the past year alone, the median price of a residence there has leaped $200,000 to nearly $750,000, which is still $100,000 less than in Harlem. Gentrification has even begun to spread to the South Bronx, long synonymous with urban decay. In a city where nearly 70 percent of residents rent, one-third pay more than half their income for that purpose. A minimum-wage worker spending half his income on rent would have to work 139 hours a week to afford the average apartment. Meanwhile, more than a quarter of a million households await space in a NYCHA project.

The current housing squeeze results from a confluence of factors. Government-engineered housing segregation and, in recent years, the lifting of rent regulation have exacerbated the problem, particularly but not only for minorities. But the primary factor driving housing prices to astronomical heights is rich people gobbling up bigger chunks of Manhattan and other prime locations. There is nothing new here. Starting in the middle of the 19th century, workers and the poor were pushed out of the centers of the major cities of Europe. Paris, where the bourgeoisie ripped down the plebeian quarters that were hotbeds of revolution, served as the model. Moreover, as Engels noted, "The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those which are centrally situated, an artificial and often colossally increasing value."

In NYC, the Astors had their Fifth Avenue mansions and working stiffs had their tenements, and later some got subsidized housing. Today, the likes of the Astors are still there, while the people who actually make the city run are pushed farther and farther out, with transit workers, construction workers and others commuting from as far away as eastern Pennsylvania. With everybody but the filthy rich feeling the squeeze, Engels' remark from his 1872 pamphlet resonates loudly today: "*This* housing shortage gets talked of so much only because it does not limit itself to the working class but has affected the petty bourgeoisie also."

Towers of multimillion-dollar apartments continue to mushroom near Central Park, often as third or fourth homes for American and foreign big money. In lower Manhattan's Tribeca, formerly a center of light industry, old warehouses

TPP...

(continued from page 9)

there is a nascent capitalist class which, along with the corruption that permeates the Communist Party regime, poses a threat of internal capitalist counterrevolution. On the other side, hundreds of millions of workers as well as poor peasants wage countless strikes, protests and riots, estimated at 500 *every day*, against the consequences of bureaucratic misrule.

This ferment points to the potential for a proletarian political revolution that will sweep away the Stalinist regime and replace it with the rule of workers and peasants councils (soviets). Such a government would put an end to bureaucratic corruption and arbitrariness, creating a centrally planned and managed economy under conditions of workers democracy. It would expropriate the new class of domestic capitalists and seek to renegotiate the terms of foreign investment in the interests of the working people. The elementary Marxist understanding is that the key prerequisite for a socialist society is the elimination of scarcity, requiring the development and expansion of industrial production and technology worldwide. Thus, a genuine communist leadership in China would fight to advance the cause of workers revolution internationally, particularly in advanced capitalist countries like the U.S. and Japan.

Workers of the World Unite!

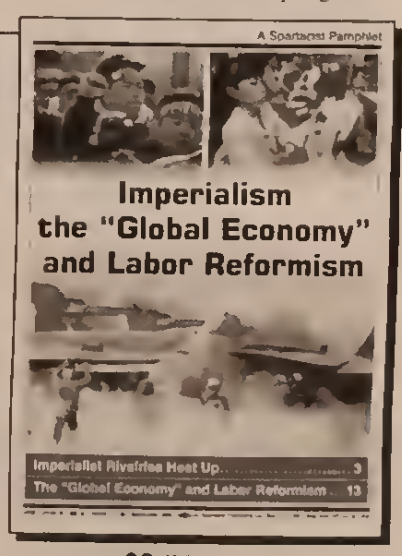
Since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the U.S. imperialists have been riding high in the saddle as the "world's only superpower." Promoting the TPP, Defense Secretary Carter boasted: "I never forget that our military strength ultimately rests on the foundation of a vibrant, unmatched and growing economy." But there's the rub. The unrivaled military might of U.S. imperialism rests on a corroding manufacturing and industrial base. Instead of investing in expanding and modernizing industry or repairing the country's crumbling infrastructure, in recent decades the ruling class has enriched itself through a succession of speculative investment binges.

In the early 2000s, to send a message to the world that America remained the top dog of the planet militarily, the U.S. imperialists toppled governments in Afghanistan and Iraq, creating a seething caldron of unrest in the region. In 2010, Hillary Clinton, then Obama's secretary of state, announced a "pivot to Asia," which would redirect U.S. forces from the Near East and Afghanistan toward the more strategic aim of destroying the Chinese deformed workers state.

Although the U.S. remains bogged down in a quagmire of its own creation in the Near East, the Obama administration has made a full-court press to get the TPP signed, sealed and delivered. Just as the workers must defend their unions against the bosses despite the bureaucratic traitors that have so undermined them, so too must they fight for the defense of the Chinese deformed workers state despite the treachery of its Stalinist rulers who likewise accommodate the imperialists.

The decades-long war against labor, the shredding of the social "safety net" for the poor and the aged, the increased immiseration of the black population—these are the domestic products of the drive by America's rulers to reverse their declining economic weight in the world. By fighting for their own interests against the U.S. imperialist predators, workers in the U.S. also strike a blow for the liberation of the oppressed around the planet. The purpose of the International Communist League is to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution, that will bring to the fore the principle of international working-class unity in the struggle for a socialist world. As the ICL's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" explains:

> "The victory of the proletarial on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization."
>
> —*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998 ■



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have been converted to luxury lofts. It is such factors that drive home prices out of reach for everyone else, whatever zoning regulations or other tinkering is attempted. The cruel "magic" of the capitalist market is simply not subject to control by more benign spirits.

Buildings are kept empty because it is more profitable to hold onto them as investments to be sold when a neighborhood gentrifies. The neighborhoods hit hardest by gentrification also have the most vacant buildings. A study three years ago by the advocacy group Picture the Homeless estimated that the thousands of properties in the city that are kept vacant could house some 200,000 people. Blacks and Latinos make up more than 95 percent of the homeless families in the overcrowded, filthy city shelters, in neighborhoods far removed from their schools, medical providers and extended family. Thirty years ago, we raised the call: "Homeless should seize Trump City!" To that we would now add the Atlantic Yards of de Blasio crony Bruce Ratner.

There once were rent regulations that kept New York City somewhat affordable for those who qualified. Those measures essentially froze the rent of the original tenant and immediate family for apartments built before 1947 (rent control) and then limited rent increases for new tenants in those built before 1971 (rent stabilization). The city's rulers had their reasons for adopting such policies. For example, a good deal of publicly subsidized housing was built after World War II to help relieve an acute shortage produced by the return of veterans.

At the same time that they decreed rent control, state lawmakers declared that the "objective of state policy" should be the "transition from regulation to a normal market of free bargaining between landlord and tenant." This one-sided "bargaining" has since come to pass. The 1993 Rent Regulation Reform Act allowed the deregulation of rent-stabilized apartments, of which NYC still has one million. That number is falling quickly.

In many cases, landlords can free themselves from constraints and charge market rate once an apartment becomes vacant. If they fail to empty buildings by pricing or buying out renters, many of these bloodsuckers just make apartments uninhabitable. In a common example, Noelia Calero of Bushwick, Brooklyn, was told by her building's new owners that they would paint and fix the bathroom, only to have the walls dividing her bathroom from the neighbor's kitchen torn out, her walls and floor ripped open and toilet and bathroom sink removed. Her family was without running water for 18 months.

In another city of soaring rents, Seattle's "socialist" councilwoman, Kshama Sawant, declares that rent control is "essential to address the existing power imbalance in which landlords and developers have all the control, just as a minimum wage is essential to defend workers from corporate executives who prefer to keep wages low" (*Socialist Alternative*, October 2015). We defend rent control and support increasing the minimum wage as measures that, however minimally, help working people and the poor to survive in this viciously class-divided, racist society. But contrary to the reformist Sawant, such measures are no more a solution to capitalist profiteering than a tourniquet is to a severed artery. The answer to the "power imbalance" between the exploiters and those they exploit and oppress is workers' *class struggle* culminating in, as Engels wrote, "the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labour by the working class itself."

"Urban Renewal": Black Removal

Today's NYC building boom recalls the redevelopment of the late 1940s-60s, which led to the saying, "Urban renewal means Negro removal." Along with state and local government policies, federal housing and development programs bulldozed black and integrated neighborhoods. More than a quarter million people were driven from their homes but only 150,000 units were built in the city. Pushed to designated corridors, black people were further compacted into overcrowded housing, while the scarcity of apartments drove up rents. The occupants of the public housing towers that were built were overwhelmingly black.

Robert Moses, the quintessential power broker behind such development projects, summarized his outlook years later by ranting, "How do you visualize the area that we cleared out for the Fordham [University] expansion downtown? They needed the space. Now I ask you, what was that neighborhood? It was a Puerto Rican slum." Along with other members of the city planning commission, Moses opposed allowing black veterans returning from World War II to move into the newly built Stuyvesant Town development in Manhattan. One thing Moses did not build was a new stadium for the Brooklyn Dodgers, prompting a team that was beloved especially by the black population to decamp to Los Angeles.

The racial segregation that is built into the American capitalist system has long been reinforced by the government. The de Blasio administration is currently fighting a lawsuit by three black plaintiffs who are challenging a policy dating back to the 1980s that reserves half of city-funded, low-income apartments for people already resident in the community. That regulation all but barred them from moving into the neighborhoods of their choice, which are predominantly white.

During the Great Migration of black people from the South, cities and towns commonly adopted zoning codes designating neighborhoods as all-white and all-black; racist mobs worked to enforce the separation. The Home Owners Loan Corporation, created in 1933, and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which opened a year later, introduced redlining: demarcating white neighborhoods where black people could not get mortgages and vice versa. Ninety-eight percent of FHA-insured loans between 1934 and 1962 went to white borrowers, spurring them to move to new, suburban single-family homes. With FHA and Veterans Administration guarantees, white working-class and middle-class families could buy homes in places like Levittown on Long Island with little or no down payment and with an extended payment schedule.

The government had an explicit policy of not insuring suburban mortgages for blacks. A 1938 FHA manual encouraged officials to avoid the mixing of "inharmonious racial or nationality groups" and "the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended." After the war, banks often refused to approve loans for black soldiers attempting to use the GI Bill to buy homes. When a black family could afford a home in a white area without government assistance, the FHA would refuse to insure future mortgages in the neighborhood, even to whites, on the grounds that integration would supposedly result in lower property values.

The 1968 Fair Housing Act, passed in the wake of the ghetto rebellions that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., directed the government to "affirmatively further" fair housing. This promise rang as hollow as the one a century earlier about giving freed slaves 40 acres and a mule. A proposal to use federal funds to compel metropolitan areas to desegregate was deleted from the bill. When Housing and Urban Development (HUD) secretary George Romney ordered the agency to reject grants for cities and states fostering segregation, President Nixon slapped him down. Successive Democratic and Republican administrations stayed that course. Since Nixon, HUD has only twice withheld money from communities violating the Fair Housing Act, all the while sending grants to those promoting segregation. A senior HUD official under Bill Clinton observed, "People say integration has failed. It hasn't failed because it's never been tried."

Sovfoto

Apartment blocks in Moscow, 1970. Despite Stalinist misrule, Soviet workers state provided population with employment and decent housing.

For Low-Cost, Quality, Integrated Housing!

Last June, the Supreme Court struck down the use of federal funds for a plan to build low-income housing in segregated black communities in Dallas, rejecting the city's claim that this was a "race neutral" attempt to revitalize the areas. A couple of weeks later, Obama's HUD announced rules requiring communities seeking housing grants to study patterns of segregation and their effect on access to jobs, quality schools and public transportation. Both the Supreme Court decision and the HUD directive are far from mandating housing integration. The Court ruling offered Dallas developers an out if they could demonstrate that the "revitalization" brought by their projects was as worthy an outcome as integration, while Obama's plan calls for communities to *either* integrate *or* distribute services more evenly. These are but a pretense of putting a bit more equal in separate-but-equal.

In this country built on chattel slavery, separate never was and never will be equal. This basic understanding has driven the historic struggles of the black masses for full assimilation into American society with equal rights. Black oppression is integral to the maintenance of capitalist class rule, serving to divide the multiracial proletariat and weaken its struggles against the class enemy. The simple truth is that the American working class cannot advance its struggle against the capitalist exploiters without simultaneously taking up the fight against the racial oppression of black people.

The civil rights struggles of the 1950s and '60s ran into a dead end because their leaders, exemplified by King, relied on the bourgeoisie, its courts and government in their attempts to achieve equality. The liberals' betrayals of black aspirations were most clearly seen in the North, where demands for "open housing" and school integration ran up against entrenched black poverty and segregation. As we noted in "Revolutionary Marxists and the Fight for Black Freedom" (*WV* No. 930, 13 February 2009):

> "The everyday conditions of life facing the mass of blacks—widespread and chronic unemployment, rat-infested slums, rampant police brutality—could not be eradicated by Congress passing another Civil Rights Act. What working-class and poor blacks hoped to achieve through the civil rights movement in the North would have required a radical restructuring of the American economy and a massive redistribution of wealth. And that the American ruling class was not going to do."

Along with housing integration, busing programs to desegregate schools were defeated by racists in the streets and liberals in government. Now, decades later, the goal of integration is rarely even uttered by those claiming to fight for black rights.

Yet the need for quality, integrated housing and schools remains pressing. The decrepit, overcrowded housing and skyrocketing costs that have long defined conditions for the ghetto and barrio masses are increasingly the plight of working people more broadly. Any real struggle for livable homes must include the demand for *low-rent, quality, integrated public housing*. This demand must be linked to the struggle for jobs for all through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay, for public works programs to rebuild this country's infrastructure, for massive pay hikes indexed to inflation.

These vital necessities demand an assault on the entire system of production for profit. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building the workers party necessary to lead the proletariat in the overthrow of the capitalist system. That party must advance the program of revolutionary integrationism: opposing every manifestation of racist discrimination and bigotry in order to arm the multiracial working class to carry out its duty to sweep away capitalist rule—the only road to black liberation. Workers' rule will lay the ground for building an egalitarian socialist society, the only basis on which to achieve genuine equality. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Trans-Pacific Partnership

Down With U.S. Imperialism's Anti-China Trade Pact!

Xinhua

No to Protectionism! Workers of the World Unite!

Atlanta, October 5: Rogues' gallery of trade ministers from the U.S. and eleven other Pacific Rim countries after concluding negotiations on TPP.

On October 5, representatives of 12 countries from across Asia and the Americas signed on to U.S. imperialism's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). If it is ratified, the TPP will be the largest trade agreement in history, encompassing at least 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product and one-third of all global trade. Japan and the more minor imperialist countries Canada and Australia have been cut in on the deal—and competing European powers cut out—but it is the U.S. rulers who hold the whip hand. Under the banner of "free trade," the TPP aims to drive up the exploitation of labor across the board while increasing imperialist domination of dependent countries. Above all, this agreement targets China, escalating the U.S. bourgeoisie's drive to promote capitalist counterrevolution there through economic pressure and military encirclement.

The TPP has been described as "NAFTA on steroids," after the 1994 agreement that opened the door for the wholesale economic rape of Mexico by America's capitalist rulers and their Canadian junior partners. The TPP agreement would batter down measures protecting industry and agriculture in underdeveloped countries, eliminating 18,000 taxes and other controls on U.S. companies' goods and services. Secret tribunals, empowered to overturn the decisions of national courts, would be established to allow investors to sue any signatory country they claim undermines their "expected profits." The bloodsuckers of America's Big Pharma drug monopolies would have their patent rights extended, ripping generic drugs out of the hands of millions of impoverished people whose lives depend on them, including for the treatment of HIV and tuberculosis.

The bourgeois rulers of Brunei, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru and other backward countries, lackeys of U.S. imperialism, signed the TPP in a bid to get their own shares of the wealth wrung from greater misery. The ruling Communist Party bureaucracy in the Vietnamese deformed workers state also agreed to the TPP's extortionate terms, acting as labor brokers in exchange for foreign investment. At the same time, the provisions of the TPP that directly target state-owned enterprises are centrally aimed at Vietnam.

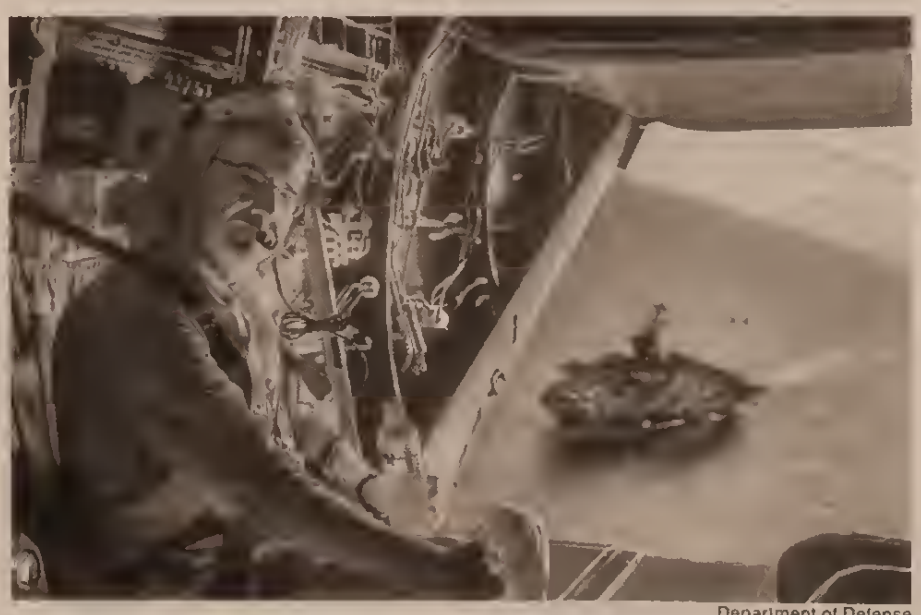
The collectivized property forms central to Vietnam's economy are a gain of the social revolution that overturned capitalism, when Communist-led guerrilla forces defeated first the French and then the U.S. imperialists and their Vietnamese puppet forces. By demanding "fair competition" for capitalist investment, the TPP aims to undermine the workers state's control of the economy.

China in the Crosshairs

The largest remaining country where capitalism has been overthrown, the Chinese deformed workers state is a strategic target of the imperialists. Washington pointedly excluded China from the agreement in an attempt to form an economic bloc against that country and undercut its growing economic reach. The TPP is the economic analog to the U.S.'s increasingly flagrant military provocations against China. Last spring, U.S. defense secretary Ashton Carter declared: "Passing TPP is as important to me as another aircraft carrier."

In the first week of November, a U.S. aircraft carrier conducted operations near Chinese land reclamation and construction projects in the South China Sea's Spratly (Nansha) Islands. These islands are of strategic importance to China's military defense and its ability to protect critical shipping lanes. Threatening China's sovereignty, Carter announced that the U.S. would make regular patrols of the area. Behind such gunboat diplomacy lies the threat of embargo and war.

To the ire of the U.S., there has been a stampede of countries, including European imperialist powers, to get in on the ground floor of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that China initiated last October. Although it has yet to begin operations, the AIIB will challenge the loan sharks who run imperialist-dominated lending institutions. While outfits like the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank dictate how countries they invest in should be governed and starve out those who don't obey, the AIIB will reportedly offer loans for much-needed infrastructure development at below-market interest rates with no strings attached. While the ruling Chinese bureaucracy is not motivated by international solidarity, neither are its international investments driven by the relentless pursuit of profit that motivates the imperialist plunder of less-developed countries.



Department of Defense

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter leaving aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt after latest U.S. provocation in South China Sea, November 5.

To counter U.S. imperialism's efforts at containment, China is also developing a "new Silk Road." Including multiple trading networks linking Asia and Western Europe, new Silk Road development includes pipelines, rail, air and sea routes as well as high-tech communications systems. These developments loomed large in the Obama administration's decision to fast-track TPP negotiations. Focusing on Asia in this year's State of the Union address, Obama argued: "As we speak, China wants to write the rules for the world's fastest growing region.... We should write those rules."

The president's push for fast-track authority suffered a brief setback in June when Democratic Party members of Congress voted it down, looking to boost their electoral fortunes with the trade-union bureaucracy. There was much rejoicing at AFL-CIO headquarters. The federation's president Richard Trumka crowed that the vote "was a marvelous contrast to the corporate money and disillusionment that normally mark American politics today." But this elation went up in smoke a few weeks later when the fast-track was voted up.

There is a burning need for internationalist proletarian opposition to the TPP, uniting the working masses around the globe in common class struggle. If the U.S. rulers succeed in the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Chinese workers state, it would mean opening China for untrammeled economic exploitation. This would be a disaster for the working class internationally, emboldening the imperialists to launch new attacks and drive down wages and working conditions not only in China, but around the world.

Raising a chauvinist hue and cry that the

continued on page 9

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1079

27 November 2015

Statement by French Trotskyists

On Criminal Attacks in Paris

The following is a translation of a statement issued by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France on November 14.

We strongly condemn the criminal killing of some 120 people last night. Everything indicates that Islamic fundamentalists carried out the attacks in support of the Islamic State and particularly in response to French airstrikes, which have been extended in recent weeks to Syria. More than ever we demand the immediate withdrawal of French and U.S. troops from the entire Near East in particular, as well as from Mali and elsewhere in the world.

The perpetrators of these acts, in indiscriminately targeting just anyone, fundamentally share the same mentality as the imperialists in identifying the working masses with their capitalist exploiters and oppressors. Yet, regardless of the barbarism of the terrorists who coldbloodedly murdered dozens of innocent civilians in the streets of Paris and in a concert hall, the fact remains that the biggest terrorists in the world

continued on page 9

Down With Anti-Muslim Repression!

U.S., France Out of the Near East!

AFP

Maxppp

Above: U.S.-led airstrike in support of Washington's Kurdish proxies battling ISIS in Sinjar, northern Iraq, November 12. Right: Cops conduct raid in Toulouse, France, November 16.

NOVEMBER 23—The attacks in Paris on November 13, responsibility for which was claimed by the Islamic State (ISIS), were a criminal act of indiscriminate mass terror, in which 130 innocent civilians were killed. The capitalist rulers use revulsion at such attacks to bolster national unity and jingoism, further binding the working masses to their exploiters and oppressors. Just as they did after the September 11 attacks, the imperialists have seized on this atrocity to beat the drums for war abroad and for more state repression at home.

The state repression is in the first instance targeting mainly Muslims, who are all deemed responsible for the crimes of reactionary fanatics. But the ultimate target of this repression will be the proletariat, the only class with both the social power and objective interest to do away with the barbaric capitalist system through socialist revolution. It is vital for working people throughout the world, not least in the U.S. and France, to oppose every attempt by the ruling capitalist powers to use such atrocities as took place in Paris to augment the repressive power of the capitalist state at home and carry out more imperialist slaughter abroad. U.S. military aggression after 9/11 led to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the devastation of the region and rise of murderous outfits like ISIS. Increasing airstrikes in the Near East will only add to the ever-mounting death toll. Unlike those killed in the Paris attacks, the names, faces and stories of these victims of imperialist terror are almost never told.

The drive to expand the bombing war against ISIS has received virtually unanimous approval from both Republicans and Democrats. President Barack Obama has stepped up airstrikes, and Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton has urged even more, calling for a no-fly zone over Syria and the deployment of more special forces to the region. Her main rival, Bernie Sanders, a darling of much of the reformist left, has echoed Clinton's call for a "broad coalition" centered on countries in the Near East as vital to "destroying ISIS." Both agree on "regime change" in Syria—the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad.

Reuters

Aftermath of criminal massacre in Paris, November 13. Capitalist rulers use terrorist attacks to justify state repression and military slaughter abroad.

French Socialist Party president François Hollande declared that France is now "at war" with ISIS and intensified French airstrikes against the Syrian city of Raqqa, an ISIS stronghold. There, at least 200,000 civilians are caught between ISIS on the one hand and the far more powerful and deadly imperialist butchers on the other. According to the bourgeois media, the bombing of Raqqa is retaliation for the murder of innocent civilians in Paris. In reality, France has been bombing ISIS since late September.

The French imperialists are no strangers to the slaughter of Arab civilians. In October 1925, as part of crushing an anti-colonial rebellion in Syria, the French army unleashed a massive bombardment of Damascus, slaughtering nearly 1,500 people, including more than 330 women and children. Contrary to assertions that

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Polish Judge Denies Extradition to U.S.

Defend Roman Polanski!

LONDON—On October 30, a judge in the Polish city of Krakow slapped down the latest attempt by American authorities to drag renowned film director Roman Polanski back to a California prison. In 1977, a Los Angeles court convicted Polanski on the charge of having sex with a minor and sent him down for six weeks of "psychiatric observation" in a California state prison. When the Los Angeles judge reneged on the original plea bargain deal and threatened to return him to prison, Polanski fled to Europe, where he has remained ever since. For four decades the American injustice system has pursued its vendetta, continuing to stretch its long arm toward Polanski's throat.

Describing the extradition request as "obviously unlawful," Judge Dariusz Mazur asserted, "I do not find any logical, rational explanation as to why the U.S. is pursuing the extradition" (*Warsaw Voice*, 2 November). Mazur also took aim at the original proceedings, stating: "The judge (in California) had no reason to move back from the [plea bargain] agreement." Even Polanski's supposed victim, Samantha Geimer, praised the latest ruling: "I believe they did the right thing and made the right decision given all the facts," she told NBC News (31 October).

Five years ago, a court in Switzerland likewise struck down a U.S. extradition request for Polanski, who has dual French and Polish citizenship. After his arrest in Zurich in late 2009, Polanski was held in prison for two months and subjected to further months of house arrest before a judge ruled against the deportation order. That arrest came on the heels of the 2008 documentary, *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, which exposed the original frame-up, including revealing evidence of collusion between the judge and the prosecution.

As Marxists, we oppose the bourgeois state enforcing "decency" through the criminal code. Reactionary "age of consent" and "statutory rape" laws conflate consensual sex with the violent crime of rape. In determining whether an act is rape or not, the guiding principle should be effective consent—nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. Laws criminalizing consensual relationships aim to strengthen the bourgeois state's regimentation of the population and to impose abstinence and guilt on youth while locking up adults who "deviate" from the sexual "norms" that the ruling class hypocritically tries to foist on the masses. We say: *Gavernment aut of the bedroam!*

Any notion that Polanski plied an innocent teen with champagne and Quaaludes during a photo shoot and then raped her was destroyed in court. It was shown that the 13-year-old Geimer, who was sexually experienced and had been "experimenting" with Quaaludes since the age of 10 or 11, was eager to consort with the director at a Hollywood photo shoot. Geimer subsequently acknowledged that she did not object to Polanski's behavior at the time. In 2013 she wrote: "I ran into the two-headed monster of the California criminal justice system and its corrupt players, whose lust for publicity overwhelmed their concern with justice."

In our 1978 article "Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski!" (*WV* No. 192, 10 February 1978) we wrote: "Sexual and social life in southern California, with its thriving drug culture and troupes of precocious and sexually active groupies hanging about the fringes of the entertainment industry, produces thousands of 'aspiring actresses'...like the one Polanski had the misfortune to run into. Regardless of what one thinks of the scene as a whole, its all-too-obvious reality makes absurd [Judge] Rittenband's attempts to force rigid morality of the Victorian era into L.A. freeways and bedrooms."

Noting that "official repression and enforced standards of sexual activity have brought oppression and pain throughout history," our article continued:

> "All those laws which define 'sex crimes' in America today are fundamentally aimed at glorifying and propping up the obscene and repressive prison of the family, for centuries the main institution for the oppression of women and children....
> "[Polanski's] prosecution, like the furor over 'kiddie porn,' feeds into the sanctimonious 'Save Our Children' crusade epitomized by Anita Bryant's anti-homosexual witchhunt—a reactionary offensive which hides behind the 'innocence' of children to enforce bourgeois morality through the vindictive persecution of 'deviants'."

What triggered the U.S. government's latest attempt to have Polanski arrested was his appearance as an invited guest at the ceremonial opening in October 2014 of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. As a young boy in the Jewish ghetto of Krakow, Polanski survived Hitler's Holocaust. Currently he is filming in Poland an account of the Dreyfus affair, the frame-up of a Jewish officer in the French army in the 1890s, which served as a litmus test for the socialist movement internationally at the time.

The U.S. vendetta against Polanski is likely not over. Los Angeles district attorney Jackie Laccy immediately vowed to continue pursuing him. The Polish prosecutor's office has the right to appeal Mazur's ruling. If they do so, they would find conditions favorable to the witchhunt. Only days before the court ruling, the anti-immigrant Catholic-clericalist Law and Justice Party came to power in Polish elections. Its leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, an overt anti-Muslim and anti-Russian bigot, highlighted his support for Polanski's extradition during the election campaign, while his new minister of justice, Zbigniew Ziobro, ranted, "paedophilia is an evil that must be pursued." Such statements are no surprise from this party which includes open anti-Jewish racists like Minister of Defense Antoni Macierewicz.

Lamentably, retrograde views are not a monopoly of the reactionary right. Down the years, we Spartacists have been the target of many leftists because of our defense of Polanski. When Stalinists are so engaged, they are just being consistent in bigotry, having, for example, traditionally decried homosexuals as deviants from the family-values norm. While that attitude is not so fashionable today, there are still Maoist sects like the Revolutionary Communist Party in the U.S. that campaign against pornography, in the name of protecting women, of course. But the vendetta against Polanski has brought together many social-democratic leftists who piously decry totalitarian Stalinism while similarly echoing the twisted social values of oppressive capitalist society and promoting interference of the capitalist state in people's lives.

One example in Britain is the "libertarian communist" group associated with the website libcom.org, which has made it a point to go after the Spartacist League for our consistent defense of Polanski. Falsely describing him as a "convicted child rapist," they accuse us of "sexist, pro-child abuse, rape-denying views" (libcom.org, 11 February 2014). It likewise denounces our defense of the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) against puritanical persecution by the bourgeois state. In the eyes of the state and its amen corner in the left and gay rights milieus, NAMBLA's crime is its advocacy of the sexual rights of youth, including in relationships with older men.

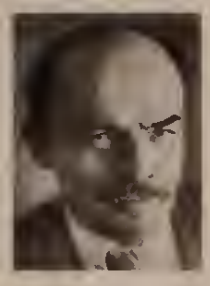
The fact that ostensibly anti-state "libertarian communists" champion the Victorian moral strictures of the church and sections of the capitalist ruling class speaks volumes. It is a measure of their proximity to bourgeois "family values" hypocrisy and their great distance from the class line, let alone from the remotest concept of real human freedom. Free love? Perhaps, but only if you're over the age of 18 and it's sanctioned by the state. In September a 14-year-old boy from the north of England was placed on a police "sex offenders" database, which is to haunt him for at least ten years, for sexting a nude photo of himself to a girl his age. Jeremy Forrest, a teacher, was recently released after serving two years in prison for having had a romantic relationship with a 15-year-old student (see "Britain: Teacher Jailed in Anti-Sex Witchhunt," *WV* No. 1028, 9 August 2013). In a communist society, where the state and the family have withered away, young (and old) people will have the freedom to engage in whatever form of sexual relationship they want.

Our defense of Polanski is part of our struggle to forge a Leninist party that will act as a tribune of the people, able to react, as Lenin put it in *What Is to Be Done?*, "to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects." If the capitalist state can get away with railroading Polanski, all the easier for it to go after the nameless, faceless thousands who end up imprisoned or placed on a "sex offenders" list because they came up against the wrong side of bourgeois morality. ■

Demolix

Polanski with attorney at Krakow press conference, October 30.

TROTSKY



LENIN

Honor John Brown and Harpers Ferry Uprising

On 2 December 1859, the revolutionary abolitionist John Brown was executed for having led the multiracial anti-slavery uprising in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, two months earlier. Brown's raid prepared the road for the liberation of slaves through the Civil War, the Second American Revolution. But with the undoing of Radical Reconstruction, the promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie. Racial oppression remains in the very marrow of American capitalism. Ending the oppression of black people that is inherent in American capitalism will require a workers socialist revolution. The following is an excerpt from an 1881 oration by leading black abolitionist and radical democrat Frederick Douglass honoring his friend and comrade given at the historically black Storer College in Harpers Ferry. The speech was published as a pamphlet to fund an endowment for a John Brown Professorship.

But the question is, Did John Brown fail? He certainly did fail to get out of Harper's Ferry before being beaten down by United States soldiers; he did fail to save his own life, and to lead a liberating army into the mountains of Virginia. But he did not go to Harper's Ferry to save his life. The true question is, Did John Brown draw his sword against slavery and thereby lose his life in vain? and to this I answer ten thousand times, No! No man fails, or can fail who so grandly gives himself and all he has to a righteous cause.... If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did at least begin the war that ended slavery. If we look over the dates, places and men, for which this honor is claimed, we shall find that not Carolina, but Virginia—not Fort Sumpter, but Harper's Ferry and the arsenal—not Col. Anderson, but John Brown, began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic. Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy and uncertain. The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared. The time for compromises was gone—the armed host of freedom stood face to face over the chasm of a broken Union—and the clash of arms was at hand. The South staked all upon getting possession of the Federal Government, and failing to do that, drew the sword of rebellion and thus made her own, and not Brown's, the lost cause of the century.

—Frederick Douglass, "John Brown: An Address at the Fourteenth Anniversary of Storer College" (May 1881)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is November 24

No. 1079 **27 November 2015**

Vindictive Retrial of Former Black Panther

Albert Woodfox Is Innocent—Free Him Now!

WBRZ-TV

Albert Woodfox walks into Louisiana courthouse, February 12.

Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

On November 9, the federal Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the state of Louisiana could try class-war prisoner Albert Woodfox a *third time* for the 1972 murder of a Louisiana prison guard. The court also gave the state the green light to keep the 68-year-old Woodfox locked up while his judicial railroading drags on. Woodfox was falsely convicted as part of a racist vendetta against him due to his political activities within Angola prison and then spent 43 years in solitary confinement, the longest stint of any prisoner in the U.S. His conviction has been overturned twice because of prosecutorial misconduct and racist grand jury rigging. Today, even according to bourgeois legal standards, Woodfox stands innocent of murder. Yet the state continues to imprison Woodfox—who suffers from heart disease, renal failure and hepatitis C—aiming to ensure that he dies in prison.

In June, after Woodfox was indicted a third time on the same trumped-up murder charge, District Court judge James Brady barred the state from retrying him. Brady cited the fact that Woodfox could not possibly receive a fair trial and ordered his immediate and unconditional release. Louisiana attorney general James Caldwell appealed that decision and now, in a two-to-one decision, the appeals panel has overturned Brady's ruling and allowed for yet another bogus trial to go forward. The dissenting judge declared, "If ever a case justifiably could be considered to present 'exceptional circumstance' barring reprosecution, this is that case."

It was 1971 when Woodfox was first sent to Angola prison, which fittingly sits on the site of a former slave plantation. There, he and fellow inmates Herman Wallace and Robert King started a Black Panther Party chapter and organized inmate work stoppages and protests. That put them in the crosshairs of their jailers. In 1972, Woodfox and Wallace were framed up for the fatal stabbing of prison guard Brent Miller. A year later, King was falsely convicted of killing a fellow inmate. The men, known as the Angola Three, fought their convictions for over four decades. Wallace was finally freed in 2013, only to die of liver cancer three days after his release. King, who was released in 2001, has since been prominent in the fight to free Woodfox. So transparent was the frame-up that Miller's widow, Leontine Rogers, believes Woodfox to be innocent and has joined the calls to release him.

There has never been one shred of physical evidence implicating Woodfox in Miller's killing. Only now will a bloody fingerprint found at the scene of the murder, which did not match any of the Angola Three, be tested against all of the inmates in Angola at that time—and only because Woodfox's attorneys successfully fought for it. Likewise, DNA testing will now for the first time be performed on the knife allegedly used in the killing.

For this third trial of Woodfox, the state has already engaged in its usual frame-up machinations. Since all four supposed eyewitnesses to the murder have since died, a state judge ruled in September that their prior testimony will be read to the jury by stand-ins. Woodfox's lawyers will thus be unable to cross-examine witnesses to challenge their credibility—a denial of the basic right of the accused to confront his accusers. That goes particularly for the government's key witness, the late Hezekiah Brown, without whose testimony the state has admitted it would not even have a case. After the first trial, it came out that Brown's testimony had been coerced by prison authorities, who threatened him with solitary confinement while dangling before him the promise of a pardon.

Woodfox should not spend another moment behind prison walls. In an August 25 letter to the Partisan Defense Committee, Woodfox evoked the 23-hour lockdowns that he was being forced to endure, declaring: "The persecution by the state of Louisiana goes on! But as ever, I remain strong and determined.... I will not break!"

We reiterate our call for Woodfox's immediate freedom and encourage our supporters to take up his cause and write to Albert Woodfox #72148, West Feliciana Parish Detention Center, PO Box 2727, St. Francisville, LA 70775.■

30th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Free the Class-War Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

CHICAGO

Sunday, January 24
3 to 7 p.m.

U.E. Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
Information: (312) 563-0442

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, January 30
3 to 6 p.m.

131 E. 10th St., Manhattan
(St. Mark's Church In the Bowery, Parish Hall, entrance on 11th St near 2nd Ave.)
Information: (212) 406-4252

OAKLAND

Sunday, January 31
1 to 4 p.m.

Oakstop, 1721 Broadway
West Wing Gallery Suite #203
(at 19th St. BART stop)
Information: (510) 839-0852

Illustration by Deni

Sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee

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Workers Vanguard Welcomes New Readers

Our annual *Workers Vanguard* subscription campaign ended on October 14, with comrades obtaining 2,030 points. This includes 904 subscriptions to *WV*, 113 subs to *Espartaco* (the newspaper of the Mexican section of the International Communist League) and 68 to other ICL press. We congratulate comrade Vance who sold 83 points and won the national sub drive.

This subscription drive allowed us to visit places where we don't have locals and to meet new readers for our revolutionary Marxist biweekly newspaper. We had the opportunity to argue politics with youth, workers and others who are angry about the oppression and inequality in society, but who have illusions in reforming the capitalist system.

One of the highlights of our sub drive was a visit to the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico where people spoke bitterly of the debt crisis choking their economy. Capitalist austerity is particularly targeting the public university and the unions, while Wall Street bankers continue to amass wealth by squeezing profits out of the workers.

Students at some of the campuses we visited in the U.S. had illusions in Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. In America's grim political landscape, Sanders's comments about the rich being too rich and the poor being too poor allow him to at times pretend to be some kind of "socialist" alternative. In fact, Sanders's role is to rope the disaffected back into the Democratic Party fold. We argued against support to Sanders or any other capitalist politician and explained the need for the working class to organize independently from the parties of the class enemy. For those most interested in a real fight for socialism, a subscription to *WV* provided an opportunity to learn about the necessity of building a Leninist vanguard party capable of leading the working class to power.

We also had discussions with workers across the country, including at ports and auto plants. Many appreciated our article on the death of New Jersey longshore worker Judy Jones and the need for unions to fight for safety and better working conditions ("New Jersey Docks: Death Trap," *WV* No. 1073, 4 September). Our sub drive intersected the expiration of the United Auto Workers (UAW) contract with the Big Three and the initial rejection of the new contract by UAW workers at Fiat Chrysler. Our article "Blood, Sweat and Tiers: Auto Workers Oppose Sellout Contract" (*WV* No. 1075, 2 October) was warmly received by workers, particularly in the Midwest. Our new pamphlet *Then and Now* was popular among subscribers. That pamphlet, which describes three militant strikes in 1934 that were led by reds, explains key historical lessons for those looking for a revolutionary perspective.

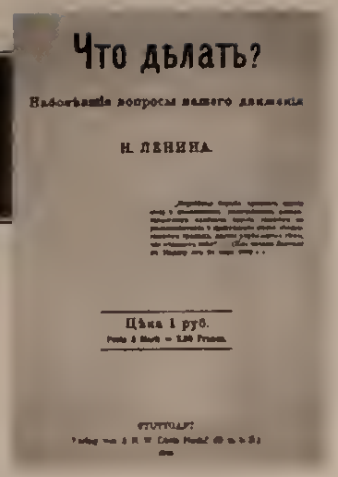
All of our teams intersected anger over black oppression and racist cop terror—from the death of Sandra Bland to the barbarism of the prison system and the death penalty. Comrades sold a number of pamphlets from our *Black History and the Class Struggle* series as well as *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), "Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism," all of which lay out our program of black liberation through socialist revolution.

We welcome our new subscribers and encourage our readers to come to our public events and contact us with comments on our articles.■

Y Mebius

What Is to Be Done?

Origins of the Leninist Vanguard Party



V.I. Lenin in 1900 and Russian-language edition of *What Is to Be Done?*

The October Revolution in Russia in 1917 demonstrated that the leadership of a vanguard party is necessary for the proletariat to successfully sweep away the exploitative capitalist class together with its repressive state and establish workers rule. Lenin forged the Bolshevik Party into the instrument that was able to lead that revolution by waging years of sharp political struggle against Menshevik opportunism and Economism. The origin and development of the Leninist vanguard party were the focus of an educational presentation given by comrade Diana Coleman of the SL/U.S. at the Spartacist League/Britain National Conference in May. We present the talk below, edited for publication, which first appeared in *Workers Hammer* No. 232, Autumn 2015.

* * *

Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) is an essential work for communists, as is, I would add, our pamphlet *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*. But neither one is easy reading. Generations of would-be communists have struggled through *What Is to Be Done?* It was first recommended to me and my friends by the Weathermen, a left-wing terrorist group that came out of the American SDS, Students for a Democratic Society. It was to address what they saw as our "Economism." While I certainly didn't join them I did take them pretty seriously. You may ask how I missed the chapter entitled, "What is there in common between Economism and terrorism?", which stated that: "The terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to connect the revolutionary struggle and the working-class movement into an integral whole." This so describes the people I met.

In any case, our group, which was a New Left working-class organising project, after reading *What Is to Be Done?* instructed a couple of our people who were working in a Kellogg's corn flake factory where the union contract had expired that any demand for higher wages or better working conditions was Economist. Therefore the only revolutionary demand was that the factory donate a hundred tons of corn flakes to the Black Panther Party "breakfast for children" programme. It says something about the tenor of the times that our people weren't laughed off the factory floor, but it did kind of beg the question as to whether the "breakfast for children" programme was itself a liberal social work programme. Anyhow, for those of you who, like me, puzzled over what was wrong with "lending the economic struggle itself a political character," hopefully this class will answer a few questions.

I will make the point that it is a common error to believe that *What Is to Be Done?* and the fight in 1903 that resulted in the division of the Russian Social Democrats (as all Marxists called themselves at the time) into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were the final word on the party question. No, Lenin was not born a Leninist—his political views developed. Leninism, as a qualitative development of Marxism, arose in 1914-17 when Lenin responded in a revolutionary manner to the inter-imperialist World War I and the collapse of the Second International into hostile social-chauvinist parties. In August 1914, when the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) voted for war credits for the German imperialist government, it became clear that the Russian Bolsheviks weren't just a counterpart of the SPD, only with better leadership. The Bolshevik party was a whole different animal than the SPD. It was only then that Lenin consciously generalised his views on the Leninist party, which were put into effect with the creation of the Third (Communist) International (or Comintern) in 1919.

So that's why I recommend both *What Is to Be Done?* and *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* to get an overall picture of the party question. Further, as others who know more than I do will speak to, we must understand the Leninist conception of the vanguard party in order to understand and evaluate revolutionary syndicalists like James Connolly, who was executed by the British state for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. Whether he would have been won to Bolshevism we will never know, but he was certainly the type that the early Comintern sought to win over.

VAAP

October 1917: Putilov factory workers and Pavlovsky Regiment with banner reading, "Long Live All-Russian Revolution as Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe. Under This Banner We Pledge to Achieve a Brotherhood of All Nations."

The "Party of the Whole Class"

Organised Russian Marxism began in 1883 when Georgi Plekhanov broke from the dominant populist current to form the tiny Emancipation of Labour group in exile. During the late 1880s and early 1890s, the Marxist movement in Russia consisted of local propaganda circles that were educating a thin layer of advanced workers. But in the mid 1890s there was a major strike wave, and the propaganda circles turned to mass agitation. In part because of the imprisonment of more experienced Marxist leaders, the mass agitation quickly degenerated into reformism. This tendency was named Economism by Plekhanov, who was then hostile to it. Economism limited agitation to elementary trade-union demands, while passively supporting the bourgeois liberal efforts to reform tsarist absolutism.

In terms of international Social Democracy, the Economists were hostile to orthodox Marxism and were loosely associated with Bernsteinism in Germany. German Social Democrat Eduard Bernstein was the quintessential reformist who gave theoretical expression to the renunciation of revolutionary Marxism in favour of "evolutionary socialism," premised on gradual reform of bourgeois society. Bernstein pronounced that for him the "movement" was everything, and the final goal of socialism was nothing. Sounds like a lot of modern-day reformists.

Bernsteinism was a minority trend in the German party, but in Russia the reformist Economists were the dominant tendency. Lenin and others in around 1900 had the difficult task of fighting to bring the party back to the revolutionary traditions of the old Emancipation of Labour group. Lenin and Julius Martov, who were the second generation of Russian Marxists, along with some of the old guard like Plekhanov, worked together using the newspaper *Iskra* as their organising centre to combat the Economists. Actually this was the first time there was really an organising centre for a Russian social-democratic party. Lenin was the organiser of the *Iskra* group and he ran the "*Iskra* agents" who went—clandestinely, because of the tsarist repression—into Russia. Using the arguments from the paper, the agents were supposed to win over the local committees and, if that didn't work, split them.

In polemicising against Lenin's successful splitting tactics, the Economists pointed out that the German centre did not seek to exclude the Bernsteinites—and that was certainly true enough. Before getting into the specifics of the arguments in *What Is to Be Done?*, let me say something about the question of the "party of the whole class." At this time Lenin accepted *in theory* leading SPDer Karl Kautsky's position of the party of the whole class. Now Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg, who was a leader of the revolutionary wing of the SPD, didn't believe that everyone in the working class would or should join the party. What they did believe was that all working class tendencies should be in one social-democratic party.

As I said, Lenin did not make a theoretical argument against this conception, but rather justified his splitting tactics by a series of arguments based on the particularities of the Russian party situation. The arguments were different at different moments: the Bernsteinites would at least follow discipline, but the Economists were incapable of accepting party discipline so there had to be a split; or the Russian party, unlike the German, was embryonic and could easily fall prey to opportunism, so therefore there had to be a split. Later Lenin argued that the Mensheviks were a petty-bourgeois tendency, not a working-class one, so that's why they shouldn't be in one party. This illustrates that, as the Spartacist tendency has often noted, it was part of Lenin's strength as a revolutionary politician that his empirical political practice often preceded his full-blown theoretical understanding. Trotsky was different; he was not inclined to jump ahead of his theoretical understanding.

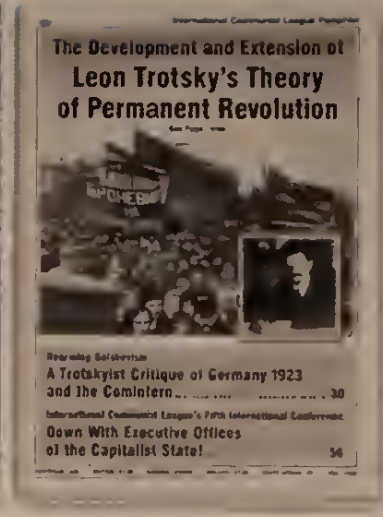
"Freedom of Criticism"—Cover for Revisionism

So *What Is to Be Done?* was written in 1902 as part of this struggle and to codify and explain the arguments. It contains the initial, basic blueprint for the construction of a party and a cadre; against Economism and all reformism, for a party of professional revolutionaries, for the party to be a tribune of the people and able to master politics in many arenas—basically for a programmatically based revolutionary party with the newspaper as a collective organiser. Sounds good—and we're still struggling to accomplish what Lenin is talking about. I did wince slightly when I read in *What Is to Be Done?*: "The mere function of distributing a newspaper would help to establish *actual* contacts (if it is a newspaper worthy of the name, i.e., if it is issued regularly, not once a month like a magazine, but at least four times a month)." I thought about the struggle of

the American section to produce *Workers Vanguard* as a biweekly.

Chapter 1 takes up "freedom of criticism." Who can he against anyone's right to criticise? But, as Lenin makes clear, the point is that "freedom of criticism" became the watchword of those who wanted to get away from the so-called "dogmatic, old fashioned" ideas of Marxism. Lenin explains that "'Freedom of criticism' means freedom for an opportunist trend in Social-Democracy, freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism." Lenin tells the opportunists to "Go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh.... Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word 'freedom.'"

Then Lenin takes up the worship of spontaneity. Lenin did not oppose spontaneous struggle. Workers strikes and student demonstrations—that's all to the good. What Lenin denounces is that under the Economists, "Instead of sounding the call to go forward towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organisation and the expansion of political activity, the call was issued for a *retreat* to the purely trade-union struggle." Further, he denounces the idea that the watchword for the Social Democratic movement must be the low-level slogan "struggle for economic conditions" or "the workers for the workers." When he discusses formulations like, "The virility of the working-class movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders," he comments on how gross this is given that the leaders were



Dietz Verlag Berlin

Left: Barricades in Moscow during 1905 Russian Revolution, when the proletariat emerged as a contender for power. Experience of 1905 was key to development of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, explained in 2008 ICL pamphlet (available for $2 from address below).

all sorts have always disputed this, Tony Cliff being one of the many: it's elitism, contempt for the working class...blah, blah, blah. We have made the point in various places that this is not a programmatic statement, but rather a ***historical analysis*** with implications for the organisational question.

The socialist movement and the trade-union movement came from different places. In general the socialist movement predated the development of mass industrial organisations of the working class and arose out of the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary currents. Comrade Joseph Seymour's very excellent series "Marxism and the Jacobin Communist Tradition," published in *Young Spartacus* (1976-79), takes up this history. We fight for a party that will be a fusion of declassed intellectuals and advanced workers imbued with socialist consciousness.

Vezenberg and Co.

Lenin (seated at center), Julius Martov (seated at right) and other leaders of League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, St. Petersburg, 1897.

torn away from the workers by the cops and secret police and exiled or jailed. Another example of the Economists bowing to spontaneity is their claim that strike funds "are more valuable to the movement than a hundred other organizations." My favourite is, as Lenin puts it, "That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is that which is going on at the given moment." This actually is very similar to a phrase which is currently still used in the U.S., "the politics of the possible" or the "left-wing of the possible"—which, not real surprisingly, always turns out to mean that the American workers should support the capitalist Democratic Party, though critically, of course.

The real point of the whole discussion on spontaneity is that the working class *spontaneously* produces trade-union consciousness, which is a form of bourgeois ideology. As Lenin says: "There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology." Communist consciousness is brought to the working class from the outside through the instrumentality of the revolutionary party. Reformists of

The Tribune of the People

Lenin's point here is that out of trade-union struggle, even if very militant, comes the consciousness that one has to fight the boss, but not that you have to overthrow and expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class. Lenin says of socialist consciousness: "The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes." Trade unionism in and of itself does not challenge the capitalist mode of production, but only seeks to better the immediate conditions and wages of the workers in struggle with individual employers. It is still a form of bourgeois consciousness. For Lenin, socialist consciousness was the recognition by the proletariat of the need to become the ruling class and reconstruct society on socialist foundations. Anything less was trade-union consciousness.

Karl Marx captured the distinction between bourgeois trade-union consciousness and revolutionary consciousness when he wrote in *Value, Price and Profit* in 1865:

> "The working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles.... They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla [sic] fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto: *'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!'* they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: *'Abolition of the wages system!'*"

So we can see where Lenin got his ideas from. This slogan is in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) preamble too, just not all that "other stuff" about a vanguard party.

Now, in the chapter on trade-unionist politics and social-democratic politics, Lenin has one of the most eloquent statements on reformism. He says:

> "Revolutionary Social-Democracy has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities. But it utilises 'economic' agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government. Moreover, it considers it its duty to present this demand to the government on the basis, not of the economic struggle *alone*, but of all manifestations in general of public and political life. In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism."

He also takes up the slogan which I had so much trouble with—"lending the economic struggle itself a political character"—which he says means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. What I didn't understand when I first read this is that when you generalise trade unionism into the political sphere, what you have is more bourgeois politics. Lenin says that what the Economists have in mind "is something far more in the nature of a trade-union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket...explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade-union secretary conducts and helps to conduct 'the economic struggle against the employers and the government'." Actually that sounds somewhat to the left of U.S. trade-union bureaucrats these days, but as times change so does the verbiage of these sell-outs.

Lenin goes on:

> "The Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

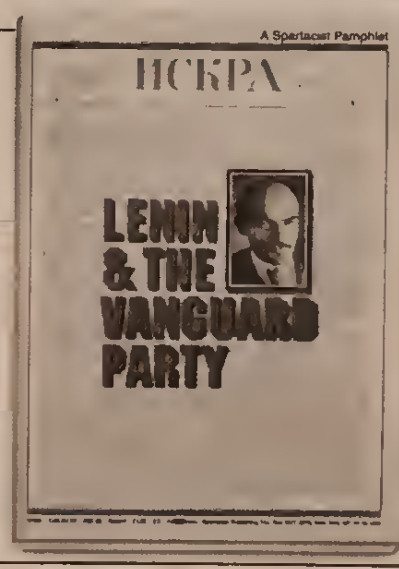
In other words, he's talking about the party as the tribune of the people that can lead the struggle for workers revolution and communism.

Now Lenin's point on the need for the party to be the tribune of the people may seem obvious. After all, that is one of the things the International Communist League is well known for: in Mexico, our comrades defend gays; in Japan, our comrades defend the Burakumin (the caste of "untouchables"). But this is a lesson that took a lot of struggle to learn. You get a vivid picture of this in Jacob Zumoff's new book, *The Communist International and U.S. Communism, 1919-1929*. Here you see the struggle that the Communist International had to wage to get the early American Communists to take up the question of black oppression. It was a real battle.

A Party of Professional Revolutionaries

Lenin takes up the amateurishness of the Russian Social Democratic movement, comparing it to a bunch of peasants armed only with clubs going up against modern troops. This situation

continued on page 6



First published in 1978, this pamphlet provides a detailed historical and theoretical account of Lenin's struggle for a vanguard party. Includes: "In Defense of Democratic Centralism"

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Vanguard Party...

(continued from page 5)

was probably inevitable at first, but his criticism is that the Economists make a virtue out of this and, consequently, fight against any attempt to correct it. An interesting book that gives you a vivid picture of this period is called *Twenty Years in Underground Russia: Memoirs of a Rank-and-File Bolshevik* (1934) by Cecilia Bobrovskaya. (It's also available on Marxists Internet Archive.) She gives a real picture of the amateurishness where she was active in Kharkov in about 1900:

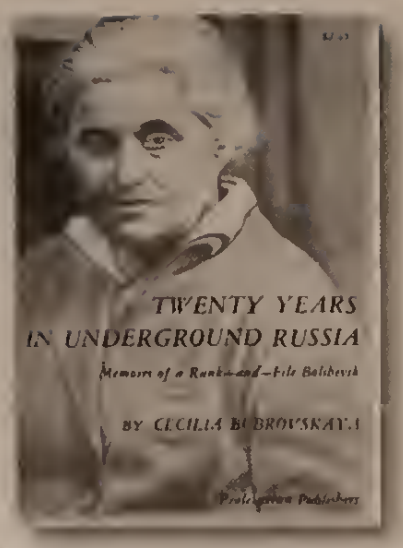
> "The workers' movement was growing apace in Kharkov while we still groped for the organizational channels through which our work was to be carried on.... There were no definite forms of organization in Kharkov or anywhere in Russia, for that matter.... More often than not these committees were formed by some active revolutionary (or group of revolutionaries) in the city, who would establish strong contacts with the masses. He (or the group) would select a few capable comrades and these would declare themselves a committee.... After the committee (the directing body) came the periphery (the executive body) which consisted of several score of comrades. There was no proper division of functions either in the committee or the periphery. Thus, for example, the committee had no secretary. There were no distinct departments for organizational, propaganda or agitation work. Nobody was even appointed to look after the literary functions.... But each one of us had to be a propagandist, organizer, printer and distributer at the same time."

Later you get a sense of how pleased she was to see some proper organisation brought to the political work:

> "At the time of which I write (1902) the *Iskra* group not only had the paper *Iskra* which was regularly published abroad and widely distributed in Russia, but also a strong organizational apparatus. In accordance with Lenin's plan there were, first of all, cadres of well-trained, responsible comrades, the so-called *Iskra* agents, who were sent by the Editorial Board of *Iskra* to work in the locals, in Russia, or were sent from place to place as necessity required. By means of systematic correspondence in secret code and personal visits they kept the center abroad constantly informed about their own work and the general state of the work in Russia.
>
> "Besides these highly qualified agents who were successfully carrying out the principles and tactics of *Iskra*, there were professional revolutionaries, who were occupied only with such technical duties as transporting literature and conveying comrades across the frontier, procuring passports and other tasks of a similar character."

This whole conception of a party of professional revolutionaries is counterposed to what you would see, for example, in the British Socialist Labour Party in the early 20th century (see "British Communism Aborted," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86).

Lenin also takes up the need for a nationwide newspaper as a collective organiser that provides the political line for the comrades as well as for the subscribers and readers. That was important then, when communication was not real easy, but it is still absolutely necessary even now. The newspaper provides the scaffolding for the party. Lenin emphasises that the revolutionary newspaper's job is to explain the inseparable connection between unemployment and the whole capitalist system, to expose the police, warn that famine is imminent, etc., etc. Lenin makes fun of the Economists who argued that these articles provided not a single concrete demand promising palpable results. How many times have we all heard this: what are you doing in the here-and-now? Some arguments never change.



Memoirs of Cecilia Bobrovskaya, published in 1934, provide vivid picture of Kharkov workers movement around 1900.

The Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDRP) in 1903 was supposed to be the culmination of the Iskraist project to create a centralised party based on a comprehensive programme. Well, it didn't quite work out that way. The Iskraists had a two-thirds majority and the Economists and the Jewish Bund were in the minority. But beneath the seemingly solid front of the *Iskra* group were very considerable tensions. There were the "hards" and the "softs," initially represented by Lenin and Martov. As you well know, this tension exploded over the first paragraph of the rules which defined membership. Martov's draft defined a party member as one who "renders it regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organizations." Lenin's more stringent membership criterion was "by personal participation in one of the Party organizations." Lenin's narrower definition of membership was motivated by a desire both to exclude opportunists (who were less likely to accept the rigours and dangers of full organisational participation) and to weed out dilettantes who had been attracted to the Russian Social Democracy precisely because of its loose circle nature.

Lenin refused to see this as some incidental organisational dispute, but insisted that it be made the basis for majority (Bolshevik) and minority (Menshevik) representation on leading bodies. Again, I would say that this was an example of Lenin's consistently revolutionary thrust leading him to break with opportunism well before he had generalised such a break theoretically. The logic of the factional struggle drove the Mensheviks to the right; gradually they replicated the politics of the defeated Economists and eventually fused with them. So there were essentially two organisations, one Bolshevik and the other Menshevik.

Lurking underneath all this was really the question of the character of the Russian Revolution. When reading *What Is to Be Done?*, it may not be immediately obvious that Russia then was ruled by an absolutist monarchy, based on a landowning aristocracy, and all Marxists agreed that the immediate tasks were essentially democratic—the overthrow of tsarism, land to the peasantry, etc. However, there was an assumption on the part of the Mensheviks that, given Russia's social and economic backwardness, this democratic revolution would be led by the liberal bourgeoisie and would necessarily lead to an extended period of capitalist rule. Basically, this rejected a revolutionary proletarian perspective in favour of a parliamentary opposition under a capitalist government!

Lenin agreed that overthrowing tsarism was the immediate task, but he vehemently disagreed with the perspective that the Marxists should form a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie. What he posited was an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the poor peasantry. As opposed to the Mensheviks, he was trying to draw a line between the proletariat, and the toiling masses in general, and the capitalist class. However, Lenin's theory at this time, "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," was flawed in that it posited a dictatorship, a state power, of two distinct classes, one of which—the peasantry—is a property-owning class.

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution—which he first developed on the eve of the 1905 Revolution, when he was still organisationally aligned with the Mensheviks—dealt exactly with this impossible contradiction. As he said, it was only the proletariat organised in the factories that could satisfy the demands of the peasants and oppressed masses through doing away with capitalist property relations and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. In carrying out the democratic tasks of the revolution, the proletarian state, supported by the mass of poor peasants, must inevitably make "despotic inroads into the rights of bourgeois property" and thus the revolution would directly pass over to the implementation of socialist tasks. Obviously there is a whole other aspect to permanent revolution, which is the necessity for international extension of the revolution, but that part was not as controversial at the time, 20 years before Stalin began pushing the anti-Marxist idea of building "socialism in one country"—in backward Russia, no less. (For further on the above, see the ICL pamphlet *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution*, April 2008.)

The point here, however, is that Lenin's algebraic formula (which he corrected in April 1917) did serve his main purpose of drawing a line against the Mensheviks and their tailing of the bourgeoisie.

Democratic Centralism vs. "Freedom of Criticism"

Until 1912, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were sometimes forced to exist as factions in the same party. Particularly after the 1905 Revolution, there was mass sentiment, especially among newly recruited workers, for reunification; there was also a need for political struggle and a sorting out process. In the rush of events, opportunists had joined the Bolsheviks and revolutionary elements had mistakenly joined the Mensheviks. For Lenin, the reunification represented both a continuing adherence to the Kautskyan "party of the whole class" and a tactical manoeuvre to win over the mass of raw, young workers who had joined the Social-Democratic movement during 1905. We cannot know how much weight Lenin gave these very different considerations. He probably didn't look forward to or project a definitive split and the creation of a Bolshevik party, but by 1912 after many struggles, that you can read about in *Lenin and the Vanguard Party*, that was the result. He still at this point emphasised the Mensheviks' petty-bourgeois character. By the way, Trotsky's rotten role in the 1912 "August bloc"—through which he tried to bring together all the disparate anti-Bolshevik tendencies in the name of "party unity"—demonstrated his Menshevik sensibilities on the party question, something which he only really came to understand in 1917.

Now let me say a word about democratic centralism, the Leninist organisational principle, uniquely upheld today by the ICL, that enshrines the right of an oppositional minority to fight for contending political positions *inside* the party—including the right to form a faction to replace the existing majority—so long as *all* members defend the majority line in public. Obviously when you're stuck in a joint organisation with a Menshevik majority or doing an entry into a social-democratic party, you're for as much "freedom of criticism"—meaning the right of a party minority to *publicly* criticise the majority position—as you can get. As James P. Cannon, the historic leader of American Trotskyism, makes clear in his book, *Speeches to the Party*:

> "Democratic-centralism has no special virtue per se. It is the specific principle of a combat party, united by a single program, which aims to lead a revolution. Social Democrats have no need of such a system of organization for the simple reason that they have no intention of organizing a revolution. Their democracy and centralism are not united by a hyphen but kept in separate compartments for separate purposes. The democracy is for the social patriots and the centralism is for the revolutionists."
>
> —"Leninist Organization Principles," April 1953

Let me give another quote from *Twenty Years in Underground Russia* describing the trials of dealing with Mensheviks during a strike in Baku in 1904. Speaking of an agitator who employed Menshevik phraseology, Bobrovskaya says:

Marxists Internet Archive

Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918), the father of Russian Marxism.

> "Ilya's fiery speeches before and during the strike breathed hatred of the Bolsheviks in general and of the Baku Committee in particular. He and his friends tried to keep the strike within the limits of a purely economic struggle and tried to keep out everything that was political. Our political struggle was the principal object of Ilya's ridicule at the mass meetings. On such occasions his harangues would be punctuated with sneering Menshevik phrases such as 'Bolshevik generals,' 'Bonapartism,' and so forth. ..
>
> "The demagogue Ilya was never tired at mass meetings of discussing minor questions like the provision of aprons, mitts, etc., by the employers, without touching upon the real significance of the strike. As a result, the more backward workers left these mass meetings without being enlightened as to the true nature of the struggle and went away determined to fight only for mitts and aprons. They would leave the meeting with a hatred

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> towards the Bolsheviks for whom mitts and aprons were a minor problem and not the vital question."

The strike was quite successful. Bobrovskaya says: "During the strike the Baku Committee tried to show the masses of workers the necessity of extended political demands both by oral agitation and by the distribution of leaflets which had been printed in our excellently equipped secret printshop. This agitation proved successful. The Baku workers became more class conscious during the strike." After mentioning that many of the wives were fairly conservative and unhappy about the strike, Bobrovskaya goes on: "Even the women ceased to nag their husbands. They realized that the struggle had been worth while. The struggle had been a hard one, but the workers secured a shortened working day and an increase in wages. But most important of all, the workers began to be recognized as a power with which it was necessary to reckon."

One more quote. Speaking about 1905 and the difficulties of getting trained agitators, Bobrovskaya adds: "These difficulties were eased somewhat in the days that followed, when, besides the official agitators, speakers appeared from among the masses themselves.... I remember a worker from the Rontaller factory who once came over to me and said timidly that he would like to speak. He wound up his long and fairly able speech with the following words: 'We button makers are a big power. If we choose we can leave all Moscow without a button.'" Well, Moscow's a lot colder than Los Angeles, so I guess that was a serious threat.

The Material Basis for Opportunism

The event which transformed Lenin from a Russian revolutionary social democrat into the founding leader of the world communist movement can be precisely dated: 4 August 1914. With the start of World War I the parliamentary fraction of the German SPD voted unanimously for war credits for the German government. There's been a lot of water under the bridge since then, but at the time seeing major European socialist parties go over to this orgy of social chauvinism and supporting their own bourgeoisies was very shocking. As is well known, Lenin at first couldn't believe it and thought the report of the SPD vote was just German war propaganda. The point is this: after the SPD's great betrayal, revolutionary Marxists could no longer regard opportunism in the workers movement as a marginal or episodic phenomenon or as a product of particular historical political backwardness. At this point, Lenin began to realise in hindsight the implications and effects of his earlier actions and positions.

Lenin's basic policy towards the war and the international socialist movement was developed within a few weeks. This policy had three main elements: 1) Socialists must stand for the defeat, above all, of their "own" bourgeois state. 2) The war demonstrated that capitalism in the imperialist epoch threatened to destroy civilisation. Socialists must therefore work to transform the imperialist war into civil war, into proletarian revolution. And 3) the Second International had been destroyed by social chauvinism. A new, revolutionary international must be built through a complete split with the opportunists in the social-democratic movement.

This last point was the most controversial one. Various types, from revolutionary social democrats Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht to revolutionary syndicalists, could agree with the first two points; it was the point about splitting the international workers movement into two antagonistic parties, one revolutionary and the other reformist, that created uproar even among those who opposed the war. So Lenin was forced to confront and explicitly reject the orthodox, Kautskyan "party of the whole class" position. He realised that the Bolshevik organisation had not, in fact, been built according to the Kautskyan formula. It had completely organisationally separated from the Mensheviks, in a formal way two and a half years before the outbreak of war and in practice long before 1912. The selection, training and tempering of the cadre in Lenin's party was fundamentally different than in Kautsky's. So he took the Bolshevik Party as the model for the Third International, the Comintern.

Another point: Lenin and Gregory Zinoviev, with whom he worked closely during the war years, had to deal with the fact that identifying opportunism as a petty-bourgeois tendency didn't deal with the world-historic betrayal they had just seen from the German SPD. The SPD had deep trade-union roots, led massive unions, its leaders—Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske—had all been workers. Lenin's analysis of the social basis for opportunism in the Second International can be seen in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916:

> "The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others. The intensification of antagonisms between imperialist nations for the division of the world increases this urge. And so there is created that bond between imperialism and opportunism.... The most dangerous of all in this respect are those [like the Menshevik, Martov] who do not wish to understand that the fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism."

So Lenin came to understand that reformism was not a petty-bourgeois tendency coming from outside the workers movement, but a part of the workers movement that had to be continuously fought. The labour bureaucracy with its pro-capitalist politics plays the role of a transmission belt for bourgeois politics into the labour movement. The fight to transform the working class from a class *in* itself—the object of capitalist exploitation—to a class *for* itself—conscious of its revolutionary goals, requires battling the false consciousness that ties the proletariat to its "own" bourgeoisie. Within the workers movement it is not only the trade-union bureaucracy which serves to reinforce the rule of capital but also the reformist pretenders to Marxism. I'm sure you have all had plenty of experience with these types.

But as *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* makes clear, the Leninist attitude towards the labour aristocracy is significantly different than towards the trade-union bureaucracy. In the imperialist epoch successful reformism is impossible. Thus whatever their background and original motivation, unless the leaders of the labour movement explicitly adopt a revolutionary course, they are forced by their social role to subordinate the workers' interests to those of the bourgeoisie, i.e. they are the "labour lieutenants of capital." In contrast, skilled, well-paid workers, the aristocracy of labour, while more susceptible to conservative bourgeois ideology, and often wretched chauvinist dogs, are not "agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement." Like the rest of the proletariat, they must be won away from their treacherous misleaders.

Even more off base is the position adopted by many American New Leftists that all workers in advanced industrial countries are an aristocracy of labour and hence impossible to win to revolution. This was the position of the Weathermen, which I mentioned before. In the interests of comic relief, let me talk about my meeting with Bernardine Dohrn, a leader of the Weathermen who was then on the "Ten Most Wanted" list in the U.S. (I had seen her "Wanted" picture up in the local post office.) We were supposed to meet on Telegraph Avenue right near the University of California campus in Berkeley. I don't think we could have picked a more public spot. Dohrn was late, and everyone was worried. She claimed that she had been up the street stealing a pair of earrings. Shoplifting when you were underground, how dumb! But it was all a part of the "outlaw" image.

Finally, we sat down to meet, and she talked about how the American working class was so bought off that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" wouldn't work—they had to be put under a "dictatorship of the Third World." She asked me what I was going to do when the North Koreans sailed into Puget Sound (near Seattle, in the state of Washington) to take over. Perhaps not answering this on a very deep level—I was kind of intimidated since she was a big shot—I just said that I didn't think that was going to happen any time soon. She said that just showed what an American-chauvinist racist I was. So I didn't join the Weathermen, and Dohrn and her hubby Bill Ayers eventually went back to Chicago, where they now hang out in liberal circles and know such unsavoury people as Barack Obama.

WV Photo

Demonstrators at Spartacist League-initiated labor/black mobilization that stopped KKK in Washington, D.C., November 1982. Leninists seek to mobilize the power of labor in defense of the oppressed.

Organizational Principles and the Revolutionary Program

You see codified in the first four Congresses of the Third International Lenin's generalisation of the Bolshevik experience: that the kind of hardened, programmatically based, democratic-centralist party was what the workers of all lands needed. That's what the "21 Conditions" (adopted at the 1920 Second Congress) for joining the Communist International were about: programmatic agreement, keeping the opportunists out. That is what we are about: trying to build an international Leninist vanguard party on a hard programmatic basis through a series of splits and fusions. Of course, given the distance between us and our opponents there hasn't been much there to even contemplate fusing with these days, but that will change.

In conclusion, I want to just refer you to Prometheus Research Series (PRS) bulletin No. 1, *Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work*. This is the first PRS bulletin we ever put out. In the introduction we say that it "appears to be the only complete and accurate English translation" of what we refer to as "one of the great documents of the international communist movement, standing as the codification of communist organizational practice as it was forged by the Bolsheviks and tested in the light of the world's first successful proletarian revolution." The Guidelines start off by making clear the revolutionary goals of the communist party. Then in the section called "On communists' obligation to do work," we very clearly hear the echoes of the Bolshevik/Menshevik fight over the definition of membership. It talks about the need for "day-to-day collective work in the party organizations." It goes on: "Thus, in its effort to have only really active members, a communist party must demand of *every* member in its ranks that he devote his time and energy, insofar as they are at his own disposal under the given conditions, to his party and that he always give his best in its service." Further: "In order to carry out daily party work, every party member should as a rule always be part of a *smaller working group*—a group, a committee, a commission, a board or a collegium, a fraction or cell."

So we see Lenin's more stringent membership criterion, "personal participation in one of the Party organizations," not Martov's looser criterion. This is an example of lessons learned and put into effect in the Comintern. And, I would add, the fact that we put out the only complete English translation of this document is one more testament to our commitment to Bolshevism and to providing revolutionary continuity.

When class and social struggle do break out, what is needed is a revolutionary party that has learned the programmatic and historic lessons of previous class battles and is able to lead the proletariat forward to state power. There are not too many of us, but there is no one else who has the same Marxist goals. So this is our job. On that slightly daunting note, I will conclude.■

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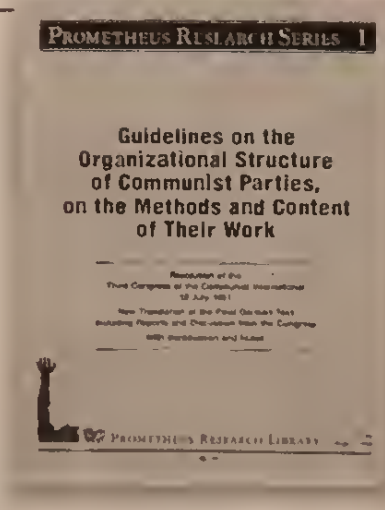

Reprinted here is an article from Australasian Spartacist *No. 227 (Spring 2015) followed by an article that appeared in* Spartacist *at the time of the 1965-66 massacre.*

Australasian **SPARTACIST**

Fifty Years Since Anti-Communist Massacre in Indonesia

Camera Press

Alleged Communist rounded up by Indonesian Army in wake of Suharto's imperialist-sponsored 1965 coup.

Fifty years ago, beginning in October 1965 and continuing through early 1966, over a million Indonesian Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were slaughtered in one of the most savage massacres in modern history. This bloodbath, a holy war against Communism, was carried out by an alliance between the army and Islamic fanatics with the direct involvement of the American CIA, aided and abetted by its Australian counterpart ASIS. This catastrophe for the Indonesian working class was a direct product of the support by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), as well as their mentors in Beijing and Moscow, to the capitalist government of Sukarno and his Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). The PKI leadership preached "joint unity" with Sukarno and the PNI to form a "united national front, including the national bourgeoisie" which would carry out "not socialist but democratic reforms."

This class-collaborationist program was based on the Menshevik/Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution," which led to the bloody defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927. The Indonesian proletariat was politically disarmed and was unable to defend itself when the Indonesian generals, led by Suharto and backed by the imperialists, struck to behead the PKI, the largest Communist party in the capitalist world. This resulted in 32 years of repressive military rule before the blood-drenched Suharto regime was toppled following two years of economic crisis and massive student-centred protests in 1998.

The key lesson of Indonesia 1965 is that the PKI's class-collaborationist "united national front" was a program of betrayal and that the liberation of the workers and oppressed masses in countries of belated capitalist development like Indonesia requires fighting for the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. This program holds that in semicolonial countries, where the capitalist rulers are tied by a thousand threads to the dominant world powers, only the proletariat mobilised independently and leading the oppressed masses can overthrow the local bourgeoisie and tear off the imperialist yoke. This task is inseparably linked to the fight for proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, opening the road to socialism. It is necessary to build internationalist revolutionary workers parties in the semicolonial countries and in the imperialist heartlands as part of the fight to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

For a detailed analysis of the events of 1965, see "Lessons of Indonesia 1965," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999. ■

"Indonesia: Lesson in Betrayal"

Spartacist No. 5, November-December 1965

The reign of terror being carried out by the Indonesian army against the working class of that country follows logically from a process of treachery tragically familiar in the annals of working class struggle. The working people of Indonesia are now ***paying with their blood*** for the betrayal by the leadership of the 3,000,000-member, pro-Chinese Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), which must share guilt for the present violence. Workers and militants of all countries, particularly those who look to the CP of China for "revolutionary" example and direction, cannot afford to ignore the warning of this classic lesson.

Mao's Peaceful Coexistence

Guided by the Mao government's "bloc of four classes" doctrine and need for "Peaceful Coexistence" with "progressive, non-aligned" capitalist "friends," such as Indonesian President Sukarno (a former collaborator with colonialism), the PKI—largest Communist party in the capitalist world—has been helping administer Indonesian capitalism while suppressing the struggles of the Indonesian workers and keeping them wedded to Sukarno's police-state. Meanwhile the Chinese press has heaped continuous praise upon Sukarno, mentioning nothing of Indonesia's poverty-stricken economy, the abysmally poor conditions of Indonesian workers, Sukarno's military aid to Laotian right-wingers, etc. (This position has been echoed by Maoists in the U.S.; the October 1965 issue of *Progressive Labor* magazine reprints a "revolutionary" speech of Sukarno, apparently as a contribution to "Marxism-Leninism"!)

Nowhere is the Maoist opportunism of the PKI better reflected than in their adherence to "Bung (Brother) Karno's" cynical strategy of "Nasakom"—a Popular Front of nationalists, religious groups, and Stalinists under the roof of class collaboration. Following this policy, the PKI concerned itself with the "national interests" of the Indonesian bourgeoisie, pressured for reforms, and endeavored to woo various ministers and sections of the military leadership over to its "struggle against U.S. imperialism." Accepting Sukarno's promise to arm the workers and peasants "if necessary," the PKI called for "co-operation between the people and the Armed Forces," and to offset unrest over Indonesia's economic deterioration raised as a major slogan *"For the Maintenance of Civil Order, Help the Police!"* This counter-revolutionary policy led directly to the present violence and the Army's work is undoubtedly facilitated by it.

In return for its aid, "Bung Karno" bestowed cabinet posts and other favors upon the PKI, including outlawing left-wing political opposition (indiscriminately labeled "Trotskyist" by the Maoists). This symbiotic relationship was further illustrated last March, when Communist petroleum workers took control of Standard Vacuum's refineries at Sungei Gerong and Pendopo. Instead of consolidating these gains and pursuing a program directed toward workers' power, the PKI allowed the Sukarno government to *give back* these plants to their imperialist owners. Foreign Minister Subandrio, another "friend" of the PKI, issued apologies to the firms and assured them that "there would be no further embarrassment of Americans" (N.Y. *Times*, 19 March 1965). Two months later, at the celebration of the 45th anniversary of the PKI, the party chairman D. N. Aidit eulogized His Excellency: *"Among us...is Bung Karno. The clear sky above us is witness to it. Thousands of eyes see him. Millions of people are listening to him over the radio and watching him on their TV screens.... Sukarno's portrait hangs beside those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin."*

Proletarian Leadership

Modern history has amply demonstrated that the outstanding problem facing the international working class is the question of leadership—i.e., the necessity for an international revolutionary party which, on the basis of its program, can lead the working people to the conquest of state power in every country. A further illustration of the counter-revolutionary nature of Maoism and its own version of "Peaceful Coexistence" is China's cynical support to the recent "palace coup" [the overthrow of Ahmed Ben Bella by Houari Boumedienne] in Algeria (where, unlike Indonesia, Peking does not control the mass party of the poor)—idiotically parroted in the U.S. by the Progressive Labor Party's judgment that (in spite of Boumedienne's recent oil give-away to France) the coup was a "revolutionary advance" because of Boumedienne's rejection of the "Trotskyites," Yugoslavs, etc., who "surrounded" Ben Bella (China's former "friend") and because of his "staunch support" of Peking's upcoming Afro-Asian Conference (*Challenge*, 27 July). Mao's former "ally," the Indian government, is now an imperialist pawn, as China's new "friend," Pakistan, was yesterday, and will be tomorrow. Similar pursuits have led the Mao government to ***suspend struggle*** in one country after another while seeking collaboration with capitalist or feudal rulers such as Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia or the "patriotic bourgeoisie" of Japan "against U.S. imperialism."

Counter-revolutionary Maoism

This line toward Japan, carried out by the big pro-Maoist Japanese Communist Party, has the gravest strategic consequences of all. Japan with its exceptional economic vulnerability and instability, its militant, organized working class and radical student movement, has been ripe for building a mass revolutionary party. At each point Chinese policy has deflected the proletariat from this course. A proletarian revolution in Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia, would profoundly alter the relationship of forces upon the whole planet. Such a revolution could *only* be carried out by a working class acting through soviets, armed and with a conscious party at its head—everything that China is not. Overnight U.S. imperialism's power in East Asia would vanish; *but the Maoist bureaucracy would be swept away in the same*

Photo Deppen

Howard Sochurek

Far left: Mao fetes Sukarno during 1956 visit to China. Left: Indonesian Communist leader Dipa Nusantara Aidit at 1955 rally. Communist Party's alliance with nationalist leader Sukarno paved way for bloody massacre.

U.S., France...

(continued from page 1)

the Paris attacks were the deadliest in France since World War II, on 17 October 1961 Paris police massacred over 150 Algerians who were protesting France's savage colonial war against Algerian independence. The bodies of many of those killed were then dumped into the River Seine.

Now, the French government has used the November 13 attacks to suspend civil liberties, including by instituting a state of emergency. In a November 14 statement (see front page), our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France declared: "We protest in advance the use of these crimes by Hollande's capitalist government to justify increasingly repressive measures against Muslims and dark-skinned people as well as to strengthen sweeping surveillance measures against the entire population."

Under the state of emergency, now extended for three months, public places can be closed with a simple administrative decision, and any association with a religious, social, national or political purpose can be arbitrarily shut down. Any person deemed by the police to be "a threat to safety and public order" can be put under house arrest or detained in a place specified by the cops. Now, Hollande wants to expand the right to strip dual citizens of their French citizenship if convicted of "harming the nation's core interests," a description so broad it could potentially be applied to any opponent of government policy. Even before the Paris attacks, six people had already been stripped of their citizenship under his regime.

Julien Jaulin/hanslucas

Striking bus drivers outside depot in Aubervilliers, near Paris, November 18. Strike was held in defiance of government state of emergency.

Such repression poses a threat to all working people in France. After public demonstrations were banned, a planned November 19 union protest in defense of victimized Air France workers was called off. At the same time, a strike by Paris bus drivers did go ahead on November 18, an encouraging sign that the workers are not just going to accept a new round of attacks by the government and bosses.

Down With Anti-Muslim Reaction!

The state of emergency has hit hardest at France's Muslim minority, already in the sights of the French state under its longstanding *Vigipirate* program, a police/military "anti-terrorism" mobilization. Muslim neighborhoods are swarming with cops raiding people's homes. Playing off the anti-Muslim hysteria, a leading right-wing politician has called for the creation of concentration camps for the 10,000 people whose government files are marked with an "S" (those the government considers suspicious, but who have not been arrested for any crime), while the fascists of the National Front (FN) call for their deportation. For his part, Hollande is considering putting such people under house arrest, a "soft" internment, and has adopted a number of the FN's "anti-terror" demands in the wake of the Paris attacks. All polls indicate that the FN will score big wins in the December regional elections. As an FN leader bragged to *Le Monde* (18 November), "All this can only be positive for us. We have a Socialist president of the republic who promotes solutions put forward by the National Front."

The growth of the FN is a deadly danger not only to Muslims, but to all working people in France. This danger underscores the vital necessity for the French workers to oppose the anti-Muslim witchhunt and any moves to strengthen bourgeois repression. Such struggle is necessary for the unity and integrity of the French working class, of which North African-derived workers form a crucial component.

Predictably, the portrayal of Muslims as a fifth column has resulted in increasing attacks against Muslim people and mosques—as well as anti-Jewish reaction by some Muslims in France. Anti-Muslim attacks have also been reported in the U.S., including in Connecticut and Florida. In Dearborn, Michigan, where a third of the population is of Arab background, a Muslim woman received a threatening letter from a neighbor calling her a "sand n----r." Another letter she received declared, "Go back to your Middle Eastern country. We HATE you more than n----rs." Feeding such vile reaction are bourgeois politicians and their kept media. In one example, CNN anchormen John Vause and Isha Sesay berated French civil liberties activist Yasser Louati, a Muslim man, for the supposed failure of the Muslim community to take "responsibility" for the attacks.

Contrary to what the bourgeois media would have us believe, fundamentalist Islam holds no monopoly on terrorism. In the U.S., countless bombings, arson attacks and assaults against abortion clinics, including the assassination of eight people since the early 1990s, have been carried out in the name of biblical injunction. But

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Statement...

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are the imperialists themselves, including the French imperialists.

It is their unspeakable crimes in the Near East that have provoked—and continue daily to heighten—the bloody chaos in Syria and Iraq, and which push youth into the arms of the Islamic reactionaries. Thus, any blow against the imperialist armies and their proxies in the Near East, even by such repugnant forces as the Islamic State, would serve the interests of the international working class. Marxists do not give the slightest political support to these reactionaries, whose horrible crimes we condemn, including those of last night.

That French youth raised in this country—over a thousand of whom have already gone to Syria to wage *jihod*—succumb to such a backward ideology indicates above all the level of desperation of a whole layer of young people from working-class families, many of them originally from the former French colonies in Africa. This is a reactionary consequence of chronic unemployment, as well as racist discrimination at school, at work, in the allocation of housing and across all aspects of life—a consequence of the racist demonization of Muslims. It is also the result of the endless betrayals by the reformist leaderships of the working class who have for so long been an obstacle to a revolutionary perspective.

We protest in advance the use of these crimes by [President François] Hollande's capitalist government to justify increasingly repressive measures against Muslims and dark-skinned people as well as to strengthen sweeping surveillance measures against the entire population. These police-state measures, as we have long insisted, are ultimately aimed at the working class, the only class with the historic interest and social power to lead all the oppressed in a struggle to overthrow the capitalist system that each day descends further into barbarism. We say: ***Down with the state of emergency! Down with Vigipirate and Sentinelle! French troops out of the Near East and Africa!*** ■

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist International which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution. This important document, which was adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL in early 1998, was published in the four language editions of *Spartacist* and additionally in eleven other languages.

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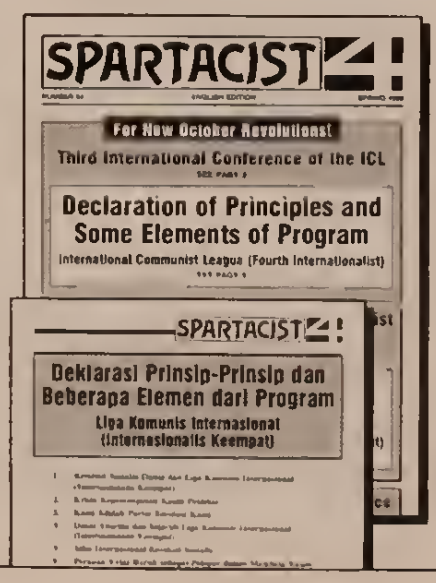

revolutionary wave. This at the most fundamental level is the basis for Chinese policy.

Political Revolution

Meanwhile, China's rotten maneuvers have helped drive all the other deformed workers' states (e.g., Cuba, N. Vietnam, and now N. Korea), except Albania, at best toward neutrality in siding with the USSR—at China's expense; for Russia possesses overwhelmingly greater economic preponderance while China offers neither trustworthy military, nor economic, nor political aid. (The N.Y. *Times*, 13 October 1965, reports that even the feudal Cambodian government now draws back from China on the valid grounds that she has done next to nothing to stop the incessant bombing of her other "ally," N. Vietnam.) Thus China is now almost totally *isolated* as she faces U.S. imperialism—a fruit of the Mao bureaucracy's policies of coexistence with "friendly" capitalist governments and cowardly subordination of the interests of the working people to the special interests of the Maoist national ruling caste. It is no cause of joy to record that once again in the Indonesian betrayals it is proved that Mao & Co. in China, as Stalin and his successors in Russia, systematically undermine the defense of the workers' states over which they rule. The defense of the Sino-Soviet bloc against imperialism urgently requires the *political revolution* by the workers in these countries against the ruling bureaucracy which strangles workers' democracy and economic growth at home and betrays revolutions abroad.

Revolutionary Party

In the United States groups such as Workers World and Progressive Labor, in their inexcusable support of the Sukarno regime and other capitalist governments, have shirked their responsibility to *tell the truth* to American workers, a necessary prerequisite to building the revolutionary movement in this, or any, country. The substitution of the illusion of automatic, inevitable revolutionary victory through guerrilla warfare (Algeria, Vietnam), or elections (Allende in Chile), or terrorism (Venezuela), or evolution of existing governments (Goulart in Brazil, Indonesia) is characteristic of the anti-working class revisionism of the PKI and the CPs of both Russia and China. Even the peasant-based guerrilla war fought to a victorious conclusion has *at best* led only to a *deformed* workers' state *barred* from the road to socialism by its bureaucratic leadership. Serious militants and revolutionists must decisively repudiate such methods and direct themselves to the outstanding task of constructing a revolutionary party which can lead the working class to the acquisition of state power.

DEMAND RELEASE OF THE JAILED COMMUNIST WORKERS OF INDONESIA!

REPLACE SUKARNO AND ALL CAPITALIST REGIMES WITH WORKERS' GOVERNMENTS!

POLITICAL REVOLUTION IN THE SOVIET BLOC!

NO CLASS COLLABORATION—TOWARD THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION! ■

Spartacist **(English edition)**
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U.S., France...

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in a country where Christian fundamentalists wield substantial political influence, this anti-woman violence is rarely labeled the terrorism that it is.

Following the Paris attacks, Republican front-runner and racist blowhard Donald Trump called for the creation of a database to track all Muslims in the U.S., while Ben Carson compared refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria to "rabid dogs." Jeb Bush, a supposed moderate, declared that only Syrian Christians who can "prove" their religion should be allowed into the U.S. On November 19, a bill passed the House of Representatives, with virtually all Republicans and a substantial number of Democrats voting in favor, that would, in effect, put a halt to any Syrian refugees entering the U.S.

Obama may denounce talk of a Muslim database, but he and his former secretary of state Hillary Clinton have implemented some of the most aggressive mass surveillance of Americans ever, with untold millions on one or another government database. In the service of even more surveillance, government officials are again demanding that companies like Apple and Google remove encryption from their electronic devices. Meanwhile, CIA director John Brennan claimed that revelations of wholesale spying have made it "more challenging" to track potential terrorists, while former CIA director James Woolsey grotesquely declared that courageous whistle-blower Edward Snowden "has blood on his hands" for the carnage in Paris and deserves to be "hanged by the neck."

Reuters

Olympia, Washington, November 20: Amid anti-Muslim hysteria whipped up by U.S. rulers, bigots protest against Syrian refugees while anti-racists hold counter-protest behind them.

Bettmann

1925: Damascus, Syria, devastated by French bombardment that aimed to crush anti-colonial rebellion. Two days of shelling killed over 1,400.

It is the U.S., French and other imperialists whose hands drip with the blood of countless tens of millions around the globe. The many gruesome crimes of outfits like ISIS, whether in a European city or far more often in the Near East and Africa, pale in comparison to the daily and historic devastation meted out by imperialist "Great Powers" upon the masses of the semicolonial world. Carnage like that in Paris is a daily occurrence on the streets of Iraq, Syria and elsewhere—carried out by the imperialists, local capitalist rulers, Islamic fanatics and sundry other reactionary forces.

The creation of inherently unstable states in the Near East, such as Iraq and Syria, was the product of the carving up of the region, centrally under the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty between Britain and France, following the collapse of the Turkish-dominated Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. When it suited their interests, the imperialists forced together mutually hostile populations or separated those who wanted to live together.

More recently, the existence of ISIS is a direct product of U.S. and other imperialist policies in the Near East. As journalist John Pilger noted: "ISIS is the progeny of those in Washington, London and Paris who, in conspiring to destroy Iraq, Syria and Libya, committed an epic crime against humanity" (counterpunch.org, 17 November). The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq pulverized that society, killing nearly one million people and sparking a brutal civil war centrally between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims. Since 2011, the U.S., France and their regional allies—such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates—have fed the fires of the Syrian civil war pitting the Sunni majority against the ruling Alawite minority represented by the Assad regime. This has included direct financing and arming of Sunni fundamentalist groups. It is in the context of such imperialist-created and -fomented devastation that ISIS has been able to grow, feeding off Sunni grievances.

Following the Paris attacks, four former U.S. Air Force drone operators and technicians wrote an open letter to Obama denouncing the drone program: "We came to the realization that the innocent civilians we were killing only fueled the feelings of hatred that ignited terrorism and groups like ISIS, while also serving as a fundamental recruitment tool similar to Guantanamo Bay. This administration and its predecessors have built a drone program that is one of the most devastating driving forces for terrorism and destabilization around the world." In coming forward, these men risk being targeted by an administration that has gone after whistle-blowers to an unprecedented degree. Indeed, their letter concludes: "We request that you consider our perspective, though perhaps that request is in vain given the unprecedented prosecution of truth-tellers who came before us like Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange and Edward Snowden."

Defeat Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

The multiracial U.S. working class must be won to the understanding that its enemy is its "own" ruling class and that it needs to oppose imperialist aggression abroad. The handmaidens to such wars are always domestic repression and the further immiseration of the working class. It is not ISIS, Al Qaeda or some other Islamic reactionary force that has taken income inequality in this country to virtually unprecedented heights. It is the U.S. capitalist rulers who have squeezed the working people of America and devastated their livelihoods. Likewise, it is the French capitalist rulers who have ravaged the proletariat and oppressed of France. Muslim youth there have such little prospect for a future that some are driven into the arms of Islamic reaction.

Every victory the imperialists gain abroad means more misery for the working masses and oppressed at home. By the same token, every setback suffered by the imperialist military forces is in the interests of the international working class. We have no side in the Syrian civil war, which is reactionary on all sides. But we do have a side *against* the U.S., French and other imperialists. As the imperialists step up their military campaign against ISIS in the Near East, we reiterate that we take a military side with ISIS when it targets the imperialists and forces acting as their proxies—i.e., the Iraqi government, Shi'ite militias and the Kurdish nationalist forces in Syria and Iraq. At the same time, we are die-hard opponents of everything the reactionary cutthroats of ISIS stand for.

While our main opposition is to the imperialists, we also oppose the other capitalist powers involved in the Syrian civil war—including Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey—and call for them to leave. In recent days, Russia has intensified its airstrikes in Syria after ISIS claimed responsibility for the criminal downing of a Russian passenger jet in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, killing all 224 on board.

The precursors of ISIS include those who cut their teeth as *mujahedin* in the CIA-backed war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. For all the talk by U.S., French and other bourgeois politicians on how to "defeat" ISIS, it was the imperialists who armed and financed these Islamists, praising them as "freedom fighters" while they butchered Soviet soldiers and those who were teaching Afghan girls to read and write. The Soviet Union intervened in 1979 in Afghanistan, at the behest of the modernizing nationalist regime there. This intervention posed the possibility of a radical social transformation for the benighted Afghan peoples. We Trotskyists uniquely declared, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!"

The USSR could have defeated the Islamic reactionaries. Instead, the Stalinist misrulers scaled back and, in 1989, pulled out their forces in a futile effort to appease the imperialists. This betrayal opened the door for capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state itself in 1991-92. Nurtured and financed by the U.S., Saudis and others, Islamic fundamentalist forces have since grown massively.

The cycle of imperialist wars and occupations is a glaring demonstration of the barbarity of the decaying capitalist world order in which the U.S. rulers predominate. The goal of Marxists in the belly of the imperialist beast is to instill in the U.S. proletariat the understanding that it has the social power and historic interest to destroy capitalist-imperialist rule from within, through socialist revolution. To realize this task requires forging a revolutionary workers party, U.S. section of a reforged Fourth International committed to the struggle for workers rule over the entire planet. ■

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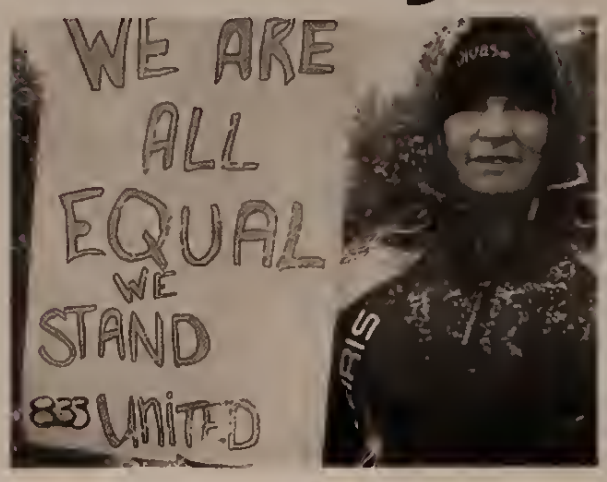

WV Photos

About 2,000 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 833 have been on strike against the Kohler manufacturing company near Sheboygan, Wisconsin, since November 16. Ninety-four percent of the workers voted to reject the company's contract offer, angered by the continuation of a two-tier wage scale and drastic hikes in health insurance costs. This is the first strike against Kohler Company, a major producer of plumbing products, since 1983. A 3,000-strong rally and march of strikers and other trade unionists was held on November 21 (photos above). A *WV* sales team spoke to many workers who knew about the long history of hard-fought battles against the viciously anti-union Kohler family, including the strike in 1934 during which two strikers were shot dead and 47 wounded by company guards and special deputies. When workers at Kohler walked out in April 1954, they began what was to be the longest strike in U.S. history—it was finally settled in 1966. One black striker with 20 years at Kohler told *WV* that sometimes "you just have to stand up and fight." Today, older, Tier A workers are bitter that younger, Tier B workers doing the same jobs get less than two-thirds of the pay. However, Kohler strikers at the rally were unaware that, despite heavy opposition from auto workers, the UAW bureaucracy had just forced through contracts with the Detroit Three (GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler) that not only preserved the wage tiers but created new ones. As at Kohler, workers in auto are outraged by the perpetuation of divisive tiers. ***Equal pay for equal work!***

Missouri...

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view that the only avenue of struggle is one of pressuring the rulers to act in the interests of those they viciously exploit and oppress. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement has looked to the Feds to rein in the killer cops, the student protesters overwhelmingly appeal to agents of capitalist class rule, e.g., the campus administration, to transform the universities into arenas of racial diversity and inclusion. The idea that the campuses can be transformed into oases of racial equality under capitalism is a pipe dream. Life in the "ivory tower" is but a reflection of the reality of American capitalism, whose entire existence has been rooted in black oppression.

WV Photo, Facebook (inset)

November 2014 protest in St. Louis, Missouri, against racist cop killings, including that of Michael Brown (inset), slain by Ferguson police in August 2014.

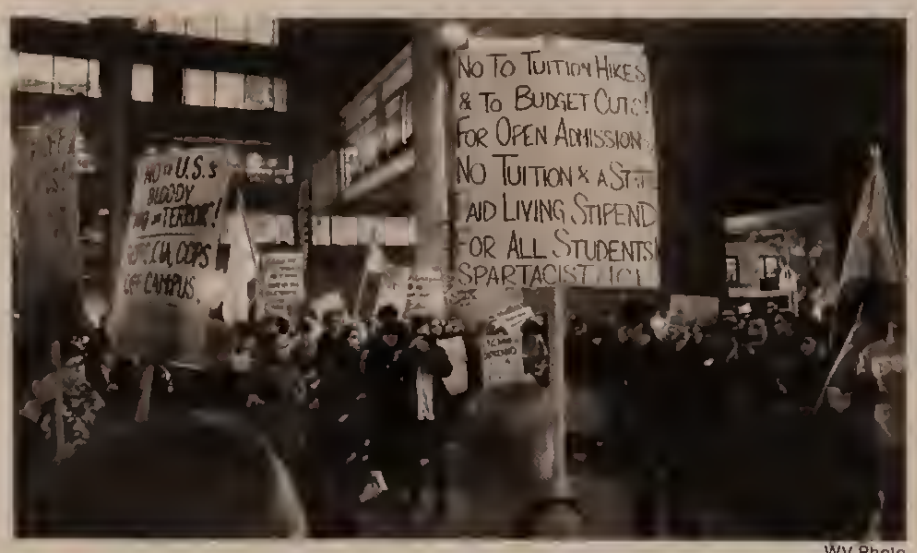
Liberal Nostrums and Racist Reaction

There was, understandably, much celebration when Wolfe resigned, especially given the racist arrogance with which he had dismissed the demands of black students. But replacing the university president will not change the role of the campus administration, whose job is to run the university in the interests of society's capitalist rulers. Fundamentally, universities under capitalism exist to educate and train administrators, technicians and intellectuals, as well as the next generation of war criminals, union-busting lawyers and murderous spies needed to advance the interests of U.S. imperialism against the working class and dark-skinned people at home and abroad. The affirmative action programs in education, which we defended, were won through the massive civil rights movement protests of the 1960s but were intended to defuse social struggle. These gains, albeit largely token, were granted with the aim of co-opting a thin layer of the black population, the so-called "talented tenth," some of whom would go on to serve America's rulers as mayors, police chiefs, military officers, etc.

Wolfe has been replaced, at least temporarily, by Mike Middleton. The retired deputy chancellor and one of the first black law graduates from the university, Middleton was himself involved in the black student protests at Mizzou in 1969. Will that make any real difference? For the past eight years, this country has been ruled by a black president, Barack Obama. His presence in the White House has done nothing to stem the vicious racial oppression of black people. The ghetto poor are little more than targets for the trigger-happy racist cops. Similarly, the people of Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria continue to be maimed and killed by U.S. drones and airstrikes.

For the racist rulers of America, Obama's election provided a much-needed facelift for U.S. imperialism. The image of a black man in the highest office of the land provided a thin gloss on murderous capitalist class rule. A black student protester at Yale expressed the disillusion that is now widespread: "It really is hard to believe because we want to believe that we're a postracial society, but it's just not true" (*New York Times*, 11 November). Nor will it ever be true short of a successful proletarian socialist revolution that shatters this entire system of racial oppression and class exploitation. In the absence of any such perspective, the Black Lives Matter movement, like so many other movements before it, is rapidly being sucked into the Democratic Party electoral machine in the interminable 2016 presidential campaign.

Many anti-racist activists have appealed for "speech codes" and "codes of conduct" in an attempt to transform the campuses into so-called "safe spaces." Such appeals disarm the victims of racist attacks on colleges by fostering illusions in the supposed "neutrality" of the university administration, itself an extension of the capitalist state. Among the demands at Amherst College are that the university president discipline "racially insensitive" students as well as that the campus cops issue a statement of "protection and defense" of the protesters against any retaliation. The notion that the police would protect protesters is a suicidal illusion. Anything that gives the campus administration and its cops greater authority allows them freer rein to crack down on political dissent by leftists, black students and other minorities. It also plays into the hands of right-wingers who, while whining about "free speech," aim to purge and silence all opposition to the status quo.



WV Photo

New York Spartacus Youth Club joins November 12 protest at Hunter College for free tuition, cancellation of student debt and $15 minimum wage.

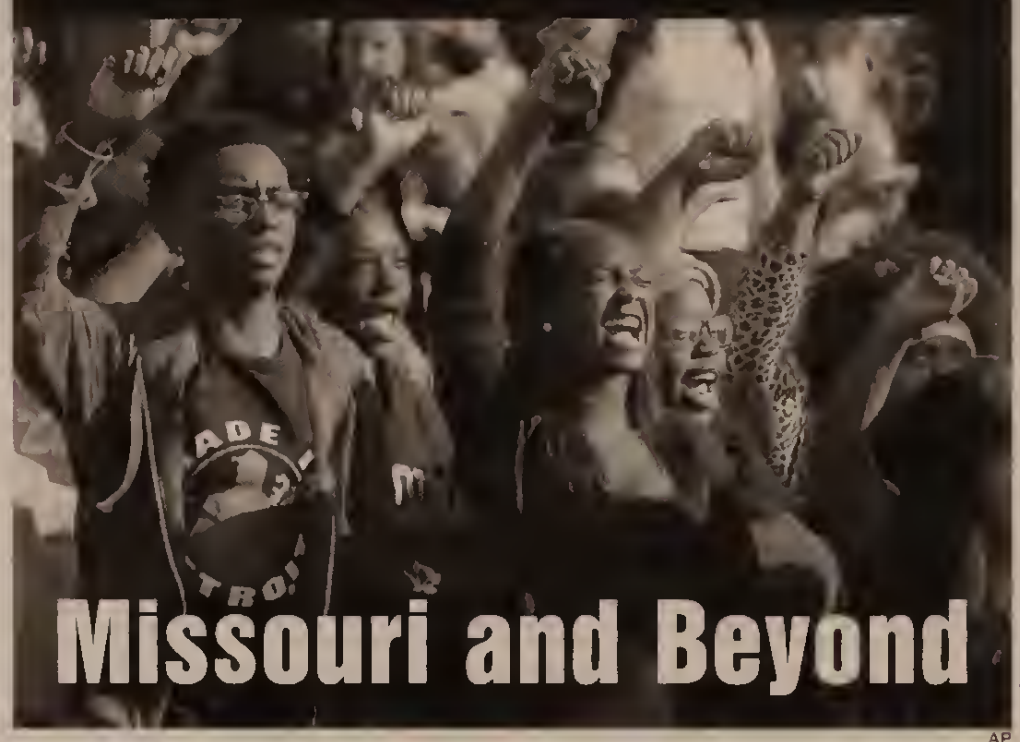
For a Class-Struggle Fight for Black Freedom!

Amid the all-sided offensive against black people in this country, it is hardly surprising that any notion of social equality seems a distant prospect. In this context, the limited and symbolic demands of the black students and other minorities are both an understandable reaction to the very real racist bigotry permeating the campuses and an accommodation to it. After a recent visit to the Mizzou campus, a *WV* sales team reported that few of the students they spoke to looked beyond raising awareness and breaking down racist stereotypes. This perspective reflects the mistaken belief that racial oppression is the result of "bad ideas" that can supposedly be overcome through "sensitivity training." On the contrary, black oppression is deeply rooted in this country that was built on the backs of black slaves. Today, the majority of the black population remains forcibly segregated at the bottom of society, subject to desperate poverty and police terror, while the rulers wield anti-black racism to divide and weaken the working class.

Unlike liberals and others who seek to sanitize the racist status quo, our purpose as Marxists is to change that reality by fighting to mobilize the power of the multiracial working class behind a series of demands that address the felt needs of the working and oppressed masses, including free, quality, integrated education for all. This requires breaking the grip of the Democratic Party on both the unions and the black population. The working class needs its own party, a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all of the oppressed. We seek to win a new generation, both on the campuses and elsewhere, to the perspective of socialist revolution, which will lay the basis for the genuine liberation of black people and the freedom of humanity. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Campus Racism Sparks Protests



Missouri and Beyond

AP

November 9: University of Missouri students cheer following resignation of university president Tim Wolfe.

In the wake of the nationwide explosion of outrage against racist cop terror, protests are now sweeping campuses across the country against the pervasive racism faced by the dwindling number of black youth "lucky" enough to have made it into a university. Skyrocketing tuition and the decades-long assault on affirmative action programs, which granted a measure of access to higher education for black youth, have led to a wholesale racist purge at colleges and universities. The few remaining black students are treated like, at best, undeserving outsiders. This message is also delivered by frat rats and other bigots with provocations reminiscent of the KKK, like the effigy of a black body swinging from a noose on the renowned "progressive" campus of UC Berkeley in 2012.

The current protests were sparked by students at the University of Missouri in Columbia, little more than 100 miles from Ferguson, where the police execution of Michael Brown ignited mass demonstrations last year. Protests at "Mizzou" began in September after black student Payton Head, president of the Missouri Students Association, described in a Facebook post how he had been terrorized by racists in a pickup truck screaming the "N" word. Spearheading the protests were a group of black students called Concerned Student 1950, referring to the year when black students were first admitted to the university. The University of Missouri system president Tim Wolfe called out the campus cops to disperse demonstrators.

After it was reported that a swastika had been smeared in feces on the wall of a dorm bathroom in late October, a black graduate student began a hunger strike to demand that Wolfe be ousted. Many students, faculty and staff walked out in support, an action that was spurred by graduate student workers who had earlier fought back and won against the university's attempt to cut off their health insurance. But it was the school's black football players, supported by their white coach and teammates, who turned the tide with the threat that they would boycott the next home game if Wolfe didn't resign. Cancellation of the game would have cost the school a million dollars. Wolfe resigned, as did the chancellor of the university.

The Mizzou football team's threatened boycott underlines the power of the college athletes who generate billions for university administrations as well as major corporations such as broadcasting and video games manufacturers. As we wrote in our *Young Spartacus* article "College Sports Plantation" (*WV* No. 1054, 17 October 2014) supporting the fight by college athletes to unionize, strike and collectively bargain for wages, health and other benefits currently denied them: "While students in general have virtually no social power, if college athletes were to withdraw their labor and go on strike, it could have a significant impact."

Such power all the more lies in the hands of the multiracial working class whose labor produces the wealth that is appropriated in the form of massive profits by the minuscule, and ruthless, capitalist class—the owners of the means of production. The sons and daughters of the working class, white as well as black and Latino, have increasingly been priced out of a college education or are buried under mountains of student debt. Here lies the potential for a class-struggle fight—allying the students with the power of labor—for free, quality, integrated education for all including open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students. A central obstacle to the power of labor being brought to bear is the misleaders of the unions who are not even defending their own members, much less lifting a finger in defense of the embattled black population. Given the long history of betrayals by the trade-union bureaucrats, it is not surprising that there is little to no appreciation of the social power of the working class. This has done much to condition a

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For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Racist Terror Attack in Minneapolis

NOVEMBER 24—Last night, five Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters were shot by three masked race terrorists in Minneapolis. While the perpetrators fled, the cops attacked those trying to help the victims, including with pepper spray. One activist reported that a cop taunted protesters about the shooting: "This is what you asked for." All five victims were hospitalized, including one shot in the stomach. Protesters have been demonstrating outside the Fourth Precinct police station in response to the cop killing earlier this month of Jamar Clark, a 24-year-old black man. Activists have faced not only police repression and arrests but also repeated threats, including masked men at their rallies. Four days before the shooting, an online video was posted of a pair of white supremacists brandishing a pistol and threatening to turn up at the protests. The Minneapolis BLM has vowed that its rallies will continue.

Lorena de la Cuesta

Wheeler/Minneapolis Star Tribune

After black activists were shot during Minneapolis Black Lives Matter protest on November 23, demonstrators continued rally against racist terror.

Last night's shooting highlights the racist terror and reaction that are integral to American capitalism. Such attacks are an auxiliary to the powerful murder apparatus of the capitalist state, the main source of racist violence. The race terrorists and fascist scum are emboldened by the daily terror meted out to black people and minorities by the thugs in blue. We seek to mobilize the multiracial working class in defense of the victims of racist terror and against every manifestation of racial oppression. Police terror will be finally done away with when the working class sweeps away the capitalist order through socialist revolution.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 1080

11 December 2015

On San Bernardino Massacre

Down With Anti-Muslim Backlash! No to Gun Control!

The December 2 rampage in San Bernardino, California, which left 14 people dead and 21 more wounded, was a brutal crime. While there are widespread claims that the married Muslim couple who perpetrated the massacre were Islamic State (ISIS) supporters, their motive remains unclear. What is clear is that America's racist capitalist rulers have seized on this attack to ramp up anti-Muslim terror and push for greater state repression and tighter gun control laws.

Muslims in the U.S. have long been under siege, a situation that has been intensified following the November 13 Paris attacks. On Thanksgiving Day, a Moroccan-born taxi driver in Pittsburgh was shot by a man who accused him of being part of ISIS. Mosques have been attacked and numerous women in headscarves have been assaulted. The night after the San Bernardino shooting, thugs broke into and vandalized the Islamic Center of Palm Beach in Florida. The *New York Times* (4 December) noted that Muslim leaders are reporting "a wave of death threats, assaults and vandalism unlike anything they have experienced since the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001."

Following 9/11, anti-Muslim hysteria was fomented by the capitalist rulers as they launched the invasion of Afghanistan and implemented a series of "anti-terror" measures whose initial target was overwhelmingly those of Islamic background. We warned at the time that such laws would also be used against black people, leftists and the working

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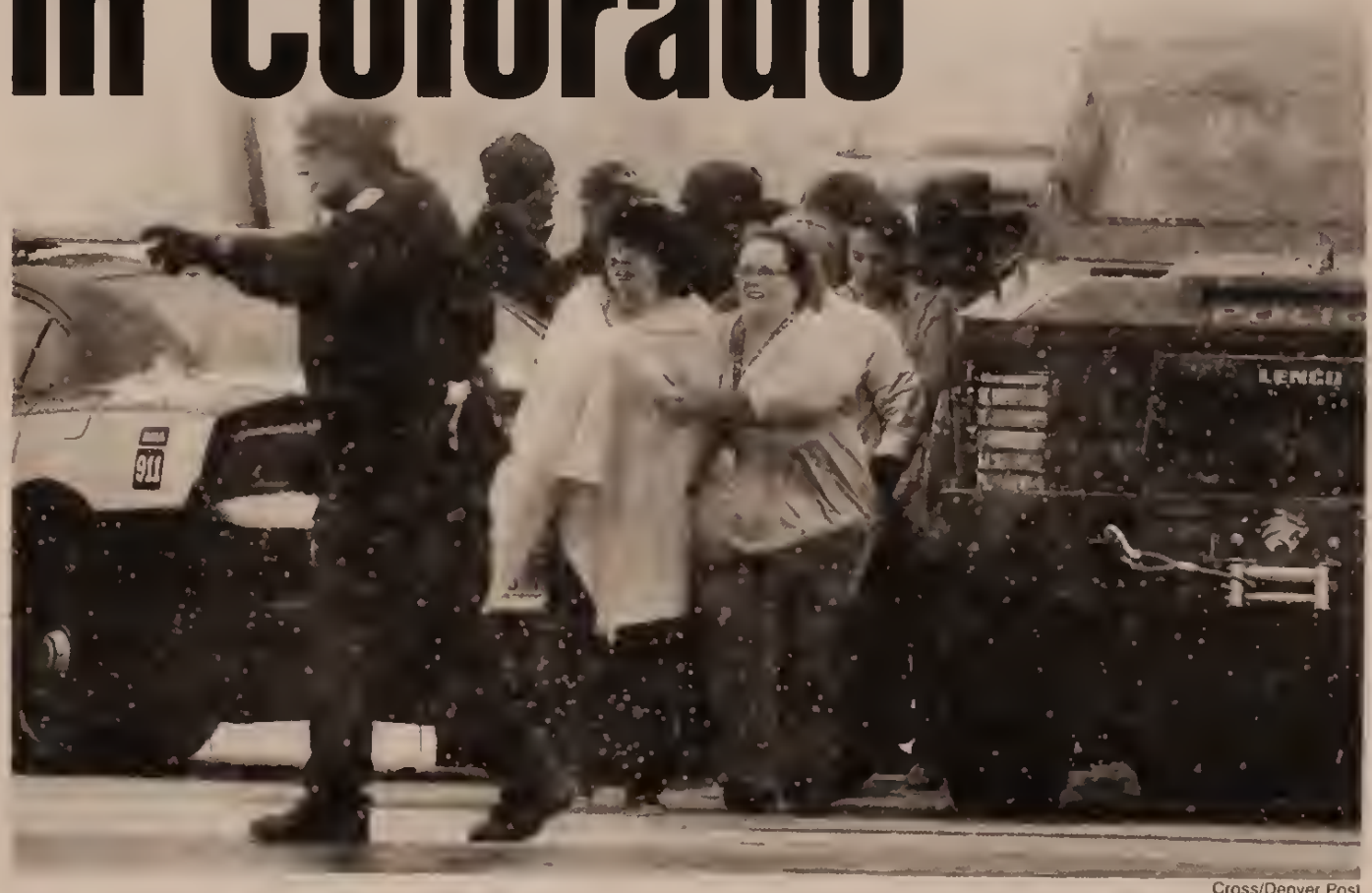
Anti-Abortion Terror in Colorado

One day after Thanksgiving, gunman Robert Lewis Dear opened fire at the Planned Parenthood facility in Colorado Springs, killing three and injuring nine others. Eleven people have now been murdered by anti-abortion fanatics since 1993. The killer's rant "no more baby parts" belied the disingenuous claims by the media and politicians that the motives of the attack were unknown. The triggerman may be a lone evangelical recluse and wife beater, yet his script was written by the preachers from the pulpits and the circus of Republican presidential candidates leading the crusade against women's right to abortion. This summer's video sting operation by the deceitfully named Center for Medical Progress launched the lying campaign that Planned Parenthood's legal and medically vital practice of making available fetal tissue for life-saving research was akin to "harvesting" human brains for profit. With anti-abortion terrorists further emboldened, in the last few months Planned Parenthood clinics in Washington and California have been attacked by arsonists while others received bomb threats.

Left in the shadows following the slaughter in Colorado is the daily violence against abortion providers by bigoted fanatics. This reality is powerfully documented in the recent book *Living in the Crosshairs—The Untold Stories of Anti-Abortion Terrorism* (2015) by lawyers David Cohen and Krysten Connon:

> "Because of their work, abortion providers have been murdered, shot, kidnapped, assaulted, stalked, and subjected to death threats. Their clinics have been bombed, attacked with noxious chemicals, invaded, vandalized, burglarized, and set ablaze. Individual abortion providers have been picketed at home and have received harassing mail and phone calls. Their family members have been followed where they work, their children have been protested at school, and their neighbors' privacy has been invaded."

The ongoing legislative assault on abortion rights serves to legitimize such tactics of terror and intimidation. For decades, Democrats, liberals and feminists have offered up one concession after another to the right wing, resulting in the chipping away of access to abortion. In turn, anti-woman bigots have launched deeper legislative offensives aiming to erect insurmountable barriers to abortion access, such as mandatory waiting periods and parental consent, and extreme TRAP (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) laws. While remaining nominally legal, the right to abortion has been effectively gutted: 89 percent of counties in the U.S. have no abortion provider, and only 14 percent of obstetrician-gynecologists perform the procedure.



Cross/Denver Post

November 27: People evacuated from Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs after deadly attack.

Defend Planned Parenthood! For Free Abortion on Demand!

Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of reproductive health care in the country. Among the plethora of services (including education) it provides, abortions account for only 3 percent. Texas and a handful of other states, including Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana, have moved to end Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood. Those most hurt by the offensive to defund the organization are the poor, minority and working-class women, as well as young teenagers, who are in desperate need of affordable health care and who make up the bulk of Planned Parenthood's patients. While most news outlets centered their condolences on the police officer killed during the stand-off, the real face of the victims of the witch-hunt against Planned Parenthood is shown by the fact that the other two killed were a black man and a Hawaiian woman, who were accompanying friends to the facility.

There is a crucial need to defend Planned Parenthood and the few besieged abortion facilities remaining. In the 1990s,

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Ireland

Racism Against Traveller Minority

The following article originally appeared in Workers Hammer *No. 233 (Winter 2015-2016), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. Travellers are a distinct ethnic group in Ireland with their own language, culture and historically itinerant way of life.*

On 10 October 2015, a fire swept through a halting site in [Carrickmines] South County Dublin, killing ten members of two Traveller families. Among the dead in the most deadly fire in Ireland in over 30 years were five young children and a pregnant woman. In the immediate aftermath of this horrific tragedy there was an outpouring of grief and solidarity with the surviving members of the Lynch/Gilbert and Connors families. However, it wasn't long before brutal anti-Traveller racism was, once again, front and centre.

With the state's flags flying at half-mast in a show of utter hypocrisy, Fine Gael [governing party] Taoiseach [prime minister] Enda Kenny and Labour's Minister for Public Expenditure, Brendan Howlin, attended the funerals of five of the victims, Tom and Sylvia Connors and their three children. Grotesquely, Howlin sympathised with those local bigots who refused to open their pubs and shops to Travellers on the day of the funerals. "I think maybe the unavailability of alcohol is not a bad thing," said Howlin, adding that there are "bad eggs in any community" (irishtimes.com, 23 October). Howlin's remarks, echoed by the Taoiseach, were condemned by Lorraine McMahon of Ballyfermot Travellers Action Group as "absolutely disgraceful." She noted that when the Taoiseach attended a Garda [Irish police] officer's funeral earlier in October, "he didn't talk about the bad eggs in the force" (independent.ie, 29 October). Racist stereotyping of Travellers is often invoked to justify their exclusion from pubs.

In another affront, the survivors of the fire were physically prevented from moving into a nearby field that they were offered to replace their now-destroyed halting site. A local mob blockaded the site with cars, preventing Traveller caravans from parking there. The council caved in to the racists and provided an empty car park, where the survivors currently live—next to a decommissioned dump. As Martin Collins, a director at Travellers' rights group Pavee Point stated: "Our community has been sickened to the pit of its stomach by the callous way the survivors have been treated over the past two weeks." Collins pointed to the irony in the fact that earlier this year Ireland had been celebrated for its approval of same-sex marriage, but attitudes towards Travellers show "that any claims Ireland has to tolerance are a façade" (*New York Times*, 29 October).

Press Association

Dublin, October 2015: Memorial of flowers and toys left at site of deadly fire that killed ten Travellers.

Travellers have been part of Irish society for centuries and have faced the same kind of vicious discrimination and prejudice as Roma (Gypsies) in other European countries. Travellers are distinguished from the "settled" population by language and by a culture based on a nomadic tradition. Shortly after the Carrickmines fire, a motion put forward by Sinn Fein in the Dail [parliament] to acknowledge Travellers as an ethnic group was voted down. As we noted in an article ten years ago, the refusal by successive Irish governments to do so is a "criminal attempt to cover for the government's continued discrimination against Travellers—a distinct group with their own language, culture and way of life. ***Defend Travellers! Down with the racist anti-trespass law!***" ("Fight Anti-Traveller Racism!" *Spartacist Ireland* No. 7, Spring/Summer 2005).

Local councils control the provision of accommodation for Travellers. But despite the current harsh economic crisis, this year almost half the country's local councils have returned the money allocated by central government for Traveller accommodation. Some 50 million euros went unspent in the period from 2006 to 2013.

No group in Irish society experiences quite the levels of poverty and misery that the tiny population of approximately 30,000 Travellers endure. The All-Ireland Traveller Health Study of 2010 revealed that male Traveller life expectancy is over 15 years less than the average for the rest of the population, while women Travellers fare only slightly better at 11.5 years below the average. Infant mortality is reported at over 3.5 times higher for Travellers than for the settled population. The 2011 census showed that 55 per cent of Travellers leave school before the age of 15 and only one per cent attain a third level [college] qualification. At least 1,500 Traveller families are reported to be living in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions; many camp by the roadside with no running water or electricity. This hideously oppressed layer also constitutes a high proportion of the prison population.

As proletarian revolutionaries, we have consistently defended Travellers, including in the face of massive police attacks on halting sites such as at Dunsink in Dublin in 2004. A revolutionary workers party would seek to rally workers to the defence of all the oppressed, recognising that it is in the interests of the working class to oppose all attacks on immigrants, women and Travellers. We seek to build such a party, dedicated to mobilising the working class in a series of struggles to bring down the capitalist system through socialist revolution. This alone will open the road to providing decent living conditions, including housing, education and healthcare for Travellers—and for settled people. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Marxism and Religion

In this holiday season of vainglorious splurging by the wealthy, the millions who live in homelessness and desperate poverty are offered a smidgen of charity and heapings of religious consolation. As Karl Marx pointed out long ago, the struggle against religious illusions must be part of the struggle against the material conditions which produce them.

The basis of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion*, religion does not make man. Religion is the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again. But *man* is no abstract being encamped outside the world. Man is *the world of man*, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion, an *inverted world-consciousness*, because they are an *inverted world*. Religion is the general theory of that world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in a popular form, its spiritualistic *point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal source of consolation and justification. It is the *fantastic realisation* of the human essence because the *human essence* has no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual *aroma*.

Religious distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.

To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness. The demand to give up illusions about the existing state of affairs is the *demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions*. The criticism of religion is therefore *in embryo the criticism of the vale of tears*, the *halo* of which is religion.

—Karl Marx, "Introduction to *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*" (1844)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is December 8

No. 1080 **11 December 2015**

Letter

Correction on North Vietnamese Military

1 December 2015

Dear Comrades:

In the WV#1078 article "Down With U.S. Imperialism's Anti-China Trade Pact!" we write: "The collectivized property forms central to Vietnam's economy are a gain of the social revolution that overturned capitalism, when Communist-led guerrilla forces defeated first the French and then the U.S. imperialists and their Vietnamese puppet forces." It is incorrect to state that it was "guerrilla forces" that defeated the U.S. imperialist colossus and their Vietnamese puppets. By the time of the victory of the communist-led forces in Vietnam in 1975, the character of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam/National Liberation Front (DRV/NLF) military forces had changed dramatically from the early years of the war. We point this out explicitly in the article "Take Saigon!" (WV#65 28 March 1975) where we describe the final offensive of the war:

> The battle for Ban Me Thuot spotlights a very important aspect of the current offensive. The DRV/NLF attack was spearheaded by a sizeable tank column. Throughout the current offensive DRV/NLF forces have employed sophisticated weapons such as tanks, armored personnel carriers, heavy artillery and radar-aimed anti-aircraft guns against the ARVN. This is no guerrilla offensive such as in 1968.

Additionally, the DRV had an air force, including Chinese and Soviet-supplied MiG fighters, hardly typical of guerrilla forces. In fact, they were so successful, the U.S. Navy established the Topgun fighter pilot training school to thwart the Vietnamese fliers in 1969.

Comradely,
Brian

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips an issue in December.**

Our next issue will be dated January 15.

Despite Worker Fury over Tiers

UAW Tops Force Through Sellout Contracts

In the tug-of-war over equal pay for equal work between the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the auto giants GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler (FCA) that played out in contract negotiations in Detroit this fall, UAW president Dennis Williams and Co. never let up in peddling the lie that they were "closing the wage gap." However, the final contracts, which huge numbers of workers opposed, said something else entirely. The UAW tops had to scramble to force their agreements through, even using members' dues to hire a New York PR firm to sell the sellout.

The contract dispute, which threatened to spill over into a strike at several stages, was centrally over the question of the two-tier wage system that was brought into the assembly plants in 2007. Introduced in the name of keeping the U.S. carmakers "competitive" with their German and Asian rivals, tiers mean that newer workers get paid a fraction of the wages earned by workers who were hired before 2007 to do the same job. This divisive scheme has been used by the "Detroit Three" to slash hourly pay rates and amass the mountain of profits they are sitting atop now, and is hated by the workforce. Workers saw that, with the companies selling record numbers of cars, now was their best chance to get rid of the tiers.

As contracts came up for ratification votes, UAW members at all three companies registered their anger in rancorous union meetings and in balloting. FCA workers rejected management's initial offer by a two-to-one margin—the first time UAW workers have voted down a national contract since 1982. Union officials gave FCA formal strike notification before forcing through a revamped contract in a second vote. At GM, a clear majority of skilled workers voted against the agreement, fearing that the proposed blending of job titles ("broadbanding") would lead to heavier workloads under more dangerous conditions and result in wage and job losses. Two weeks later, the bureaucrats declared the contract ratified, with 55 percent of GM workers overall voting yes. Ford workers were offered one-off signing bonuses of as much as $10,000 (up from the lousy $3,000 offered at FCA), but even with that sweetener only 51 percent voted in favor of the contract. At the end of the day, workers at all the Detroit Three are still stuck with contracts preserving the wage tiers—and had new tiers crammed down their throats by their rotten leadership.

Kardell/Toledo Blade

Toledo, September 27: Angry Fiat Chrysler workers at rally demanding equal pay for equal work. Signs include: "Back to the Table—No Deal!"

As far back as September 2014, during a one-day strike against an Indiana seat plant run by Lear Corporation, workers in both tiers made clear that they were fed up with the whole damn system. "End Two Tier! Start with Lear!" was their slogan. The UAW tops quickly ended that strike with a ruse claiming that they had done away with the two-tier wage scale and trumpeting the "victory" as a model for the upcoming contracts with the Detroit Three. In reality, they had agreed to the relocation of most of the workers on the lower-paid tier to another plant, reclassifying them as "subassembly" workers who would make barely more than the minimum wage.

Workers Vanguard warned: "Come this September, the union tops are again likely to try to proclaim victory over the tier system while attempting to sell the membership a new scheme to preserve that system's attack on wages and working-class unity" (*WV* No. 1064, 20 March). That's exactly what came to pass at the Detroit Three.

The top tier, shrinking fast as workers die or retire, got a small raise, their first in a decade. The second tier, soon to become the new top tier, got promises of raises spread out over eight years (a joke, since the contracts expire in four years) that would eventually bring them to $29 an hour—a dollar more than the top tier previously got. These workers will never receive the defined benefit pension that used to provide a measure of security in retirement for UAW members who survived the backbreaking assembly lines—it will die when the last surviving top-tier worker does. Second-tier workers at GM and Ford will get first-tier health care benefits, but FCA workers will not.

The list of unequal compensation agreed to by the bureaucrats goes on and on. Parts workers at GM were shunted into an entirely new tier, with a wage scale topping out at $22—about $280 a week less than top wages for second-tier assembly line workers. The ever-growing pool of temporary workers, constituting yet another tier, will get paid even less, and not even as much as temp workers are earning today. An indication of how bad the deals are for workers was Ford's gleeful statement that its labor costs will increase less than 1.5 percent per year as a result of the contract. All workers should be in the union on the same pay scale, and parts workers should be in the same local as the assembly plant they supply!

The desire for equal pay for equal work runs very strong right now in the UAW, and more broadly in the working class. Some 2,000 workers organized in UAW Local 833 are on strike against the Kohler Co. plumbing manufacturer in Wisconsin over this very question (see *WV* No. 1079, 27 November). But the fealty of the UAW trade-union bureaucracy to the capitalist profit system, as demonstrated by their actions this contract season, is counterposed to the realization of even this most basic tenet of the workers movement. Manifestly incapable of leading any serious fights, these guys are long overdue for replacement. But not by the out-bureaucrats and wannabees waiting in the wings, who have no fundamental difference with the current labor lieutenants of capital in Solidarity House—they all push reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party and the government, in place of independent working-class action.

What auto workers need is a class-struggle leadership forged in battles like the ones that built the UAW and other industrial unions in the 1930s. Such fights would go a long way toward restoring the unions as battalions of the proletariat. Armed with the certain knowledge that the working class has no interest in common with the bosses, a union like the UAW could bring to bear its inherent power to choke off the profits derived from a core industrial sector. It could play a leading role in a broad fight against capitalism's ravages, drawing in other workers and the unemployed as well as black people and immigrants targeted by the capitalist rulers. To hold to such a perspective against the many obstacles that the bourgeoisie will put in the way requires building a revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist profit system for good and forever. ■

No to Public Housing Smoking Ban!

Hell Is Not Hell Enough

On November 12, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro revealed an outrageous proposal to nationally ban all smoking in public housing over the next several years, invoking the agency's seemingly divine "responsibility to protect public housing residents from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke" (*Washington Post*, 12 November). In fact, major studies that tried to find a health risk from secondhand smoke show no statistically meaningful correlation. But the health, happiness and well-being of the denizens of public housing have nothing to do with the proposed ban. As Councilman Ritchie Torres, a Democrat who leads the New York City Council's public housing committee, put it, "If the federal government is generally concerned about improving public health, how about fixing roofs or removing mold?" Or how about providing real medical coverage for everyone rather than the sham of "Obamacare," where deductibles are often so high as to render coverage almost unusable?

There are a little over two million people inhabiting public housing. For the most part they are huddled near the bottom of the sociological barrel of American society—the elderly, disabled and the working poor and their children. They live on incomes well below the poverty level, but are nevertheless obliged to pay 30 percent of their income to rent apartments in buildings that are not infrequently rat-infested and falling apart. Although 32 percent of public housing residents are white, the nearly half who are black are segregated into some of the nation's meanest ghettos. Blacks and Latinos are four times more likely than white people in similar housing to live in high-poverty neighborhoods (where the poverty rate exceeds 40 percent).

The proposed ban on smoking would take away one of the few pleasures available to those consigned to earthly hell while providing authorities with yet another pretext to evict public housing residents. Since Democratic president Bill Clinton introduced the "one strike, you're out" rule in 1996, felons have been prohibited from living in public housing while others have been evicted for being suspected of criminal activity without even being charged with, much less convicted of, a crime. Tenants can face eviction merely for having visitors, including relatives, who have been convicted of a felony. Today, the Obama administration is seeking to expand a 1996 program that allows selected public housing agencies to set time limits for occupancy and to link residency to children's academic success. Meanwhile, no new funds have been allocated for public housing since the mid-1990s, while 10,000 units a year are lost to decay. The reality is that public housing is headed for the junk heap.

Housing agency representatives have suggested that residents will have to enforce the proposed smoking prohibition. This, as many have pointed out, is a decidedly unhealthy proposal that would turn residents into potential finks and would only lead to more police raids. It is not difficult to imagine the blowing away of a black tenant by an invading cop who "mistakes" the non-diet cola in his hand for a gun. Look at what happened to Akai Gurley: last November a New York cop in the Brooklyn projects shot and killed him as he was walking in the stairwell with his girlfriend because the elevators were broken.

There is no reason for the cruel indignities visited upon this section of the population other than the very nature of the capitalist order. The growth of the profits and wealth amassed by the owners of the means of production always goes hand-in-hand with increasing misery and poverty for working and poor people. And when these depredations are visited on black people, they are done so with a vengeance. The cornerstone of American capitalism is the race-color caste oppression of black people—an oppression that drives a wedge between black and white

continued on page 8

30th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

Free the Class-War Prisoners!

This year's Holiday Appeal marks the 30th year of the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends as an expression of solidarity to those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression and imperialist depredation. This program revived a tradition initiated by the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, its founder and first secretary (1925-1928). This year's events will pay tribute to two former stipend recipients: Phil Africa of the MOVE 9 who died under suspicious circumstances in January and Hugo Pinell, the last of the San Quentin 6 in prison, who was brutally assassinated in August. We honor the memory of these courageous individuals by keeping up the fight for the freedom of all class-war prisoners. The PDC currently sends stipends to 14 class-war prisoners.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." Framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Federal and state courts have repeatedly refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the policeman. In 2011 the Philadelphia district attorney's office dropped its longstanding effort to legally lynch America's foremost class-war prisoner. He remains condemned to life in prison with no chance of parole. Mumia now faces a life-threatening health crisis related to an active case of hepatitis C which brought him close to death in March. The Pennsylvania prison authorities adamantly refuse to treat this dangerous but curable condition.

Leonard Peltier is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its Native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier was framed up for the 1975 deaths of two FBI agents marauding in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 71-year-old Peltier is not scheduled to be reconsidered for parole for another nine years. Peltier suffers from multiple serious medical conditions and is incarcerated far from his people and family.

Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Some recipients of PDC stipends for class-war prisoners (clockwise from top left): MOVE 9 prisoners Janet Africa, Delbert Africa and Eddie Africa; Mumia Abu-Jamal; Ohio 7 militants Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman.

Seven MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa** and **Eddie Africa**—are in their 38th year of prison. After the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, they were sentenced to 30-100 years, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops when a bomb was dropped on their living quarters. After nearly four decades of unjust incarceration, these innocent prisoners are routinely turned down at parole hearings. None have been released.

Albert Woodfox is the last of the Angola Three still incarcerated. Along with Herman Wallace and Robert King, Woodfox fought the vicious, racist and dehumanizing conditions in Louisiana's Angola prison and courageously organized a Black Panther Party chapter at the prison. Authorities framed up Woodfox and Wallace for the fatal stabbing of a prison guard in 1972 and falsely convicted King of killing a fellow inmate a year later. For over *43 years*, Woodfox has been locked down in Closed Cell Restricted (CCR) blocks, the longest stretch in solitary confinement ever in this country. His conviction has been overturned three times! According to his lawyers, he suffers from hypertension, heart disease, chronic renal insufficiency, diabetes, anxiety and insomnia—conditions no doubt caused and/or exacerbated by decades of vindictive and inhumane treatment. Albert was ordered released by a federal judge in June, but the vindictive Louisiana state prosecutors are bringing him to trial yet again for a crime he did not commit.

Jaan Laaman and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. The Ohio 7's politics were once shared by thousands of radicals but, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not crimes. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They are victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation, under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now spent more than 40 years behind bars. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter and Mondo new trials despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a 911 audio tape long suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal events will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to racist capitalism and imperialist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252. ■

Holiday Appeal Fundraisers

Free the Class-War Prisoners!
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

CHICAGO
Sunday, January 24
3 to 7 p.m.
U.E. Hall
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)
Information: (312) 563-0442

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday, January 30
3 to 6 p.m.
131 E. 10th St., Manhattan
(St. Mark's Church in the Bowery, Parish Hall, entrance on 11th St. near 2nd Ave.)
Information: (212) 406-4252

OAKLAND
Sunday, January 31
1 to 4 p.m.
Oakstop, 1721 Broadway
West Wing Gallery Suite #203
(at 19th St. BART stop)
Information: (510) 839-0852

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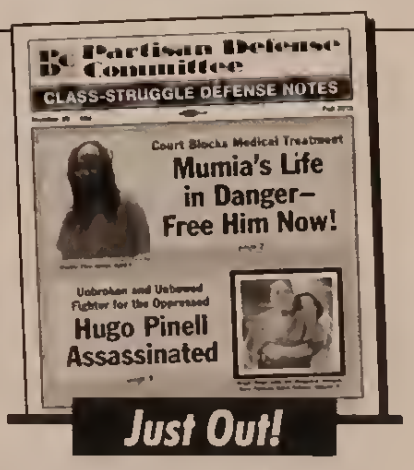

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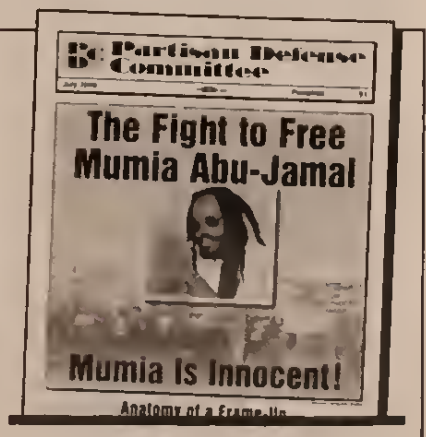

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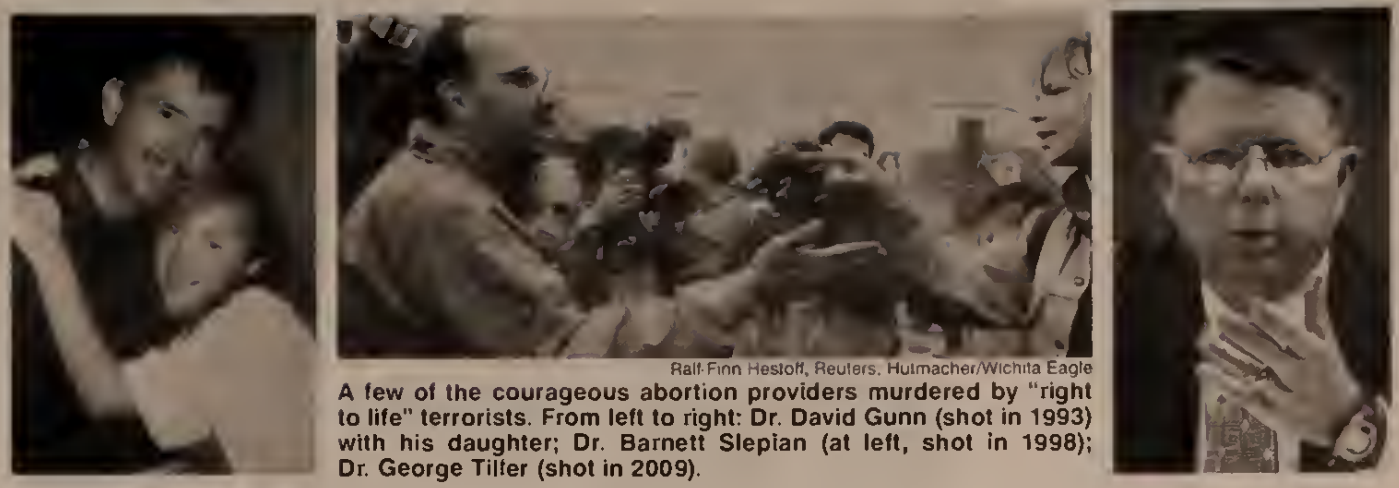
Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

liberal and left-wing activists mobilized in mass clinic defense actions at the height of Operation Rescue's nationwide anti-abortion terror campaign. The Spartacist League and its supporters participated and noted that if such mobilizations were bolstered by the power of labor, they would make a real show of strength in support of women's rights. We pointed out that the only thing capable of stopping "god-fearing" reactionaries from spreading their murderous attacks against poor and working women was to put some real "fear of god" into them. Yet bourgeois feminist groups such as NOW and NARAL consciously demobilized clinic defense, diverting the struggle into pressuring the false friends in the Democratic Party to implement so-called buffer-zone laws to keep anti-abortion protesters at a distance from clinics. Such laws have not stopped the mobs besieging staff and patients. As we emphasized from the start, these laws are also used to arrest clinic defenders.

Abortion is a simple medical procedure, safer than childbirth. But because it provides women with some control over whether or not to have children, abortion is seen as a threat to the patriarchal family, which is the main source of women's oppression and a key prop of capitalist class rule. The regulation of abortion and contraception—both of which open the possibility of women being able to have sex without having children—has historically been a powerful weapon in the hands of organized religion and the capitalist state to enforce conservatism and social conformity. Unrestricted access to both abortion and contraception, as part of quality health care for all that is free at the point of delivery, is a vital necessity for women and for working people as a whole. *For free abortion on demand!*



Ralf Finn Hestoft, Reuters; Hutmacher/Wichita Eagle

A few of the courageous abortion providers murdered by "right to life" terrorists. From left to right: Dr. David Gunn (shot in 1993) with his daughter; Dr. Barnett Slepian (at left, shot in 1998); Dr. George Tiller (shot in 2009).

Democrats and Republicans: Enemies of Women

Loathing the right-wing bible-thumpers of the Republican Party is an act of sanity, but support to the Democrats is no way to defend abortion rights. The first major attack on abortion rights following the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling took place under the "born again" Christian and Democrat Jimmy Carter, who in 1977 signed into law the Hyde Amendment that eliminated abortion coverage from the Medicaid health plans of 23 million poor women. It has been renewed every year, regardless of which party controlled Congress or the White House. Cut from the same cloth, in 2010 Obama signed an executive order ensuring that federal funds from his signature Affordable Care Act are not used for abortion.

Back in 1992, the Clinton of the male persuasion won the presidency with support from women for his pro-*Roe* stance, and then proceeded to carry out a relentless campaign aimed particularly at poor and black women. During Bill Clinton's eight years as president, welfare for mothers was axed, the number of abortion providers plummeted, and state after state passed laws restricting abortion rights. Current Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton, while defending Planned Parenthood in words, constantly panders to the religious right. She has stated that abortion should be "safe, legal and rare, *and by rare I mean rare.*" The Democrats' "pro-choice" position is at best hollow, catering to middle-class and bourgeois women who have always had the means to get an abortion when they need to. Skilled in spouting family values moralism, the Democrats pander to fundamentalist reactionaries whose goal is to keep women "in their place," i.e., subordinate to men as mere baby-making vessels.

WV Photo

Spartacists join in defense of abortion clinic against violent Operation Rescue fanatics, San Mateo, California, July 1993.

Feminists keep pushing the repeat button when it comes to relying on bourgeois politicians and the federal government to supposedly protect women. Following the Colorado Springs attack, NARAL issued a petition demanding that the Department of Justice "investigate clinic violence as domestic terrorism." It is of course crystalline hypocrisy that the U.S. rulers do not deem anti-abortion attacks terror because Christians, not Muslims, carry them out. But anything that strengthens the capitalist state's "war on terror" will be another dagger aimed at the working class, the oppressed and immigrants, who are already in the crosshairs of the government, its cops and courts. Since the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, homegrown white supremacists and anti-government extremists have perpetrated more acts of terrorism on U.S. soil than Islamic jihadists. Nonetheless, those the state targets as "domestic terrorists" continue to be leftists, militant trade unionists, black radicals and Muslims.

President Obama's main contribution to the abortion "debate" has been to seize on the Colorado Springs attack to push for more gun control. Gun control ensures that the beleaguered abortion providers are disarmed, effectively denying their right of self-defense in the face of anti-abortion terror. Meanwhile, the "army of god" zealots and crazies will still be able to get their hands on weapons. As *Living in the Crosshairs* quoted Dr. Warren Hern, a late-term abortionist based in Colorado: "Our adversaries are at war with us. They will stop at nothing, up to and including assassination." Knowing that the fortified walls and security entrances of a clinic cannot guarantee immunity from a fanatic's gun, many providers are accustomed to going to work armed and wearing bulletproof vests. All of them recall the 2009 murder of Dr. George Tiller at his church. For over 35 years, Tiller heroically provided abortions to women, including late in pregnancy, despite massive legal and extralegal harassment.

Innocent people are killed precisely because they are unarmed and defenseless in the face of reactionary killers incited by the bigotry and inequality which pervade every aspect of American society. Every day, abortion clinic workers, as well as patients and their volunteer escorts, have to run a gauntlet of anti-woman bigots on their own without assurance of protection by law enforcement. *Living in the Crosshairs* provides accounts from abortion providers in some areas whose complaints of harassment have been willfully ignored and from other providers who have witnessed collaboration between cops and anti-abortion protesters. Placing more restrictions or outright bans on gun ownership tramples on the population's basic rights while allowing the capitalist state—with its police and military—to have a monopoly of violence and to further consolidate its repressive powers.

Racist, Anti-Woman Homegrown Terror

In this racist and anti-woman capitalist society, the onslaught against abortion is directly linked to generalized social reaction, particularly against black people. The legal right to abortion was won as a result of the massive social struggles of the 1960s and '70s, the civil rights movement and the radicalization of the Vietnam War years. Following those upheavals, whole sections of the U.S. bourgeoisie sought to reverse the limited gains won by both women and black people. Since the early 1980s, this reactionary backlash has been spearheaded by the Christian fundamentalist right. While the current focus of this crusade is the war on women's right to abortion, the right-wing evangelical movement, which became politically mainstream during the Carter administration, came to prominence through defending racial segregation at private Christian schools.

It is no coincidence that the states of the former Confederacy have some of the most restrictive abortion laws. A week before the Planned Parenthood carnage, a black abortion provider, Dr. Willie Parker, wrote a *New York Times* opinion piece (18 November) describing the immense difficulty women have in obtaining abortions in the South, where they often travel hundreds of miles for an appointment. Dr. Parker is among the shrinking number of doctors willing to perform abortions in the poorest state of the country, Mississippi, where only one clinic remains. His courageous commitment to women's rights is all the more striking because it goes against the black church, which promotes social backwardness around issues of sex, especially abortion.

Dr. Parker noted: "A majority of pregnancies in the South are unintended. More than a quarter end in abortion.... In some areas of Mississippi, the rate of death for black pregnant women mirrors that of countries in sub-Saharan Africa." Impoverished and desperate conditions will continue to force poor, black and immigrant women into squalid back-alley abortions. A 2013 law restricting abortions in Texas has forced the closure of around half of the 40 clinics in the state. Since then, hundreds of thousands of women there have tried to self-induce abortions, using potentially unsafe methods without medical supervision.

The whittling away of abortion rights exemplifies the fact that reforms benefiting the working class and the oppressed can easily be reversed under capitalism. Abortion must be defended, but the right to abortion does not mean equality for women in the broader sense. Contrary to the reformist left and the feminists, we revolutionary Marxists understand that women's liberation cannot be achieved by relying on the ruling class, its political parties or its state: it requires a revolutionary transformation of society through a workers revolution, which will sweep away the system of capitalist exploitation to which black oppression and women's subordination is integral. Only after capitalism is overturned can we lay the basis to build a society where women will be able to have children (or not) with full social support including free quality childcare and medical care including contraception and abortion. ■

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Japan: Protests Against Militarism

TOKYO—Amid widespread opposition and mass protests, the right-wing government led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) rammed new "National Security Laws" (NSL) through the Upper House of parliament in an overnight session on September 18. The NSL authorize the Japanese military to engage in combat overseas in support of an ally such as the United States or in pursuit of so-called collective security. Not without symbolism, the parliamentary session took place on the anniversary of the "Manchu Incident," which signaled the start of the 1931 invasion of China by Japanese imperialism.

Bression/Guardian

Tokyo, September 2015: One of the nightly mass protests organized by Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy against Japanese National Security Laws.

The central purpose of the current laws is to further strengthen the military encirclement of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state created by the overthrow of capitalist rule in the 1949 Chinese Revolution. In this intent, Japan collaborates closely with U.S. imperialism. While overshadowed by the American military behemoth, the Japanese state has at its disposal a standing army—euphemistically called the "Self-Defense Forces"—of close to 250,000 active troops. With the seventh largest military budget in the world, Japan possesses top-notch military technology in some fields, such as ultra-silent submarines. For 2016, the government is proposing Japan's highest military budget in the post-World War II (WWII) period.

If the hawkish Abe administration had counted on its anti-China scaremongering to line up a majority of the population to support or at least acquiesce to these laws, the task proved to be not so easy. An anti-government protest movement, of a scope quite unprecedented in recent years, developed in opposition to the warmongers. Protest rallies repeatedly mobilized tens of thousands, ranging from mothers' organizations and kindergarten nurses to workers' assemblies, with students playing a leading role in initiating a broad protest movement. Notably, support ratings for the Abe administration, very high for years, fell to 30 to 40 percent at the height of the protest movement over the summer.

The first protests last May were small but the events grew steadily. Over 100,000 people surrounded the parliament building on July 15, when the government forced the bills through the Lower House. Even after the legislation was passed, 25,000 people rallied against it on September 23. Smaller protests continue on a regular basis. The prominent protest group Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy (SEALDs) describes its aim as "bringing together the forces of liberalism" in Japan. These young people reject the bourgeoisie's refrains about the need to sacrifice for the country, and many say they wish for a "peaceful world."

Opponents of the drive toward militarism often base their arguments on the provisions of the postwar Japanese constitution, imposed on the country by the American occupation forces after Japan's defeat in WWII. The Constitution's Article 9 states that Japan forever renounces the use of force to settle international disputes. As communist opponents of the Japanese bourgeoisie, the Spartacist Group Japan of course opposes any reactionary revisions of the Constitution. But we forthrightly combat illusions that this document or any other piece of paper can "prevent war." No capitalist ruling class in history has ever been constrained by its own laws from employing violent repression and war when it feels its own class interests are at stake.

While the protests' dominant politics do not go beyond liberalism and pacifism, nonetheless it is a good thing that there is a widespread horror of imperialist war and distrust of the government. The SGJ has participated in a number of the protests, selling our press and discussing our views with workers and youth. We have explained that the working class worldwide needs to defend the Chinese workers state against the Japanese imperialists and have argued that militarism is inherent to capitalist rule and can only be finally defeated by socialist revolution.

Down With U.S.-Japan Counterrevolutionary Alliance! — Defend China! —

U.S. Navy, AP (inset)

Aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer during exercise "Keen Sword 15," November 2014. Inset: Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe with President Obama.

The LDP had planned a series of activities to rally the population around the bills, but canceled many of them, recognizing they would likely draw more protesters than supporters. Anger against the new militarization laws was shown when Abe was booed in Okinawa when he attended a ceremony commemorating Japanese war dead. In Tokyo, a key leader of the LDP, Sadakazu Tanigaki, met with a similarly hostile reception on June 7. In the face of this opposition, on September 16, the government unleashed its cops against anti-militarism demonstrators, making numerous arrests. Protest leader Aki Okuda has reportedly received death threats.

The Abe government is following in the footsteps of the previous Democratic Party government (2009-12), which also pursued military buildup targeting China, most notably the Japanese government's declaration nationalizing the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea in September 2012. The NSL are a message that in any military conflict with China or North Korea, which is also a deformed workers state, the Japanese bourgeoisie intends to bring its military power fully to bear in league with the U.S. imperialist forces. The new laws are part of the ongoing strengthening of the counterrevolutionary U.S.-Japan military alliance. The key sectors of big business stand fully behind Abe on this question, as declarations by the major bosses' associations have shown. As communists, we say: ***Down with the NSL! Down with Japanese imperialism!***

Defend the Gains of the Chinese Revolution!

The 1949 Chinese Revolution was a world-historic event that still defines the political situation in East Asia. It ended the rule of the rapacious indigenous capitalists and landlords and liberated the most populous nation on earth from imperialist subjugation. Enormous strides forward in the living standards of the masses, in education, health and nutrition as well as women's access to society more broadly—especially in comparison to other poor countries that have remained capitalist, such as India—are living proof that a collectivized economy is superior to capitalism and represents a historical advance.

Resulting from the military victory of peasant-guerrilla forces led by the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in a civil war, the workers state issuing out of the 1949 Revolution was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. While bourgeois property relations were smashed and a collectivized economy established, the Revolution brought to political power a Stalinist, nationalist bureaucratic regime which is an obstacle to development toward socialism (a classless society) and which opposes the revolutionary conquest of power by workers in other lands.

Until it was destroyed by imperialist-backed counterrevolution in 1991-92, the Soviet Union was the industrial and military powerhouse of the states where capitalism had been overthrown and hence the chief target of the imperialist powers led by the U.S. Today, China has taken center stage in their counterrevolutionary designs. We unconditionally defend China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution and fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist rulers. The best defense of China's gains is workers revolutions in the imperialist centers. Since its emergence as an imperialist power in the late 19th century, the Japanese ruling class has longed to dominate China. Today this appetite is redoubled as the rulers in Tokyo and Washington seek to undo the 1949 Revolution and reconquer China for unrestricted imperialist plunder.

Okinawa Bases: Dagger Aimed at China

In recent years, the U.S. imperialists, even while bogged down in the Near East quagmire, have been moving some of their most advanced military hardware into the Asia-Pacific region. The important Yokosuka naval base is the home port for a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier. Hand in hand with the U.S., Tokyo is now moving to build new military bases in Okinawa and is creating an amphibious landing force directly targeting China. The frequent pretext is "defense of the Senkaku Islands." We defend China's control of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and also fully support China's development projects—including military installations—in the South China Sea. This area has become a critical focal point of imperialist efforts to encircle China.

This is recognized by such bourgeois ideologues as Robert D. Kaplan: "Just as German soil constituted the military front line of the Cold War, the waters of the South China Sea may constitute the military front line of the coming decades" (*Asia's Cauldron—The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific*, 2014). This fall, the U.S. provocatively sent a Yokosuka-based American destroyer into the seas around the Spratly (Nansha) Islands to dramatically underline its opposition to China's construction of new islands.

Following its victory in WWII, the U.S. moved immediately to establish direct military administration of Okinawa (in fact the island was returned to Japanese civil administration only in 1972, two decades after the rest of the country). As Chinese Communist forces were driving out the corrupt bourgeois forces of Chiang Kai-shek in the late 1940s, the U.S. fortified

Okinawa as a military bastion, establishing bases often by direct confiscation of land. These bases were soon to be used in the counterrevolutionary wars against the workers and peasants in Korea and later in Vietnam.

U.S. military planners have long termed Okinawa the "keystone of the Pacific"; today as part of the anti-China buildup, its military significance, and that of the surrounding islands and islets, is growing. Now, Japanese imperialism is increasing its own presence with the building of new military bases as well as increasingly sharing military facilities with the U.S. In Henoko, Okinawa—against strong local opposition—the Japanese government is building a super-modern base for U.S. Marines. Today intended to be a launching pad for U.S. and Japanese marauding and provocations in the region, it is also a potential future base for the Japanese navy.

The island's military bases have been a focus of popular protest by Okinawa's people for decades. Demonstrations were often sparked by particular instances of U.S. soldiers' male-chauvinist pig behavior toward local women, but the opposition on Okinawa to military bases is deeply rooted. Last summer, one LDP "study group" meeting in Tokyo openly mooted the suppression of the two main bourgeois newspapers in Okinawa, which reflect the dominant anti-bases sentiment, prompting a storm of protest. The passing of the NSL also puts wind in the sails of ultra-militarist right-wingers; indeed the night after the new laws were passed, a group of violent rightists, obviously in cahoots with the cops, assaulted anti-bases protesters at Henoko. We say: *All U.S. military bases out! Down with the U.S./Japan Military Security Treaty! Smash the counterrevolutionary U.S.-Japan military alliance through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific!*

Pacifism and the Protest Movement

Today in Japan (as in the United States), the view is widespread that World War II was a "war against fascism" in which the Anglo-American "Allies" were fighting for "democracy." But WWII, like WWI, was an interimperialist war fought for control of colonies, markets and spheres of influence. The late-arriving imperialist powers, Germany, Italy and Japan, had been mostly shut out of what they saw as their share of Asia and Africa.

Authentic Marxists opposed all the imperialist powers in WWII and fought for international working-class solidarity and for revolutionary struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. At the same time, our revolutionary forebears unconditionally defended the Soviet Union against the imperialists. They also championed the movements for national independence which emerged in the colonies while the imperialists were busy fighting each other. In contrast, after Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941, the parties of the Stalinized Communist movement were patriots and opponents of class struggle in the capitalist countries that were allied with the USSR; in the oppressed colonies of those Allied imperialists they opposed pursuing the struggle for national and social liberation.

When the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, Japan was already defeated. The bombs, whose purpose was to showcase the new weapon in order to intimidate the Soviet Union, killed some 200,000 people. The war and Japan's defeat instilled in broad layers of the Japanese population deep fear and hatred of war that remain important factors in politics today. One of the consequences is that there remains strong popular attachment to the "peace Constitution." Although what the bourgeoisie really wants is the outright revision of the Constitution, it does not feel confident enough right now to go for that, which would require a referendum. From this hesitancy came the tactic of passing laws that "re-interpret" the Constitution.

Following Japan's defeat in 1945, a powerful workers upsurge began, sparked by a strike by Chinese and Korean prisoners of war and forced laborers in the mines of Hokkaido (the northernmost Japanese island). There were massive strikes, which led in some industries and parts of the country to the establishment of "production control" committees—workers committees that took over factories and exercised, in different degrees, control over production, challenging bourgeois property rights. It was in this context that the U.S. occupiers basically wrote and imposed the Constitution on Japan.

The working people had suffered great material privation in the war, and the power structure had lost all authority through defeat. Thus, the top priority for the occupation was to ensure orderly capitalist rule in Japan. The Constitution naturally enshrined private property and, importantly, upheld the emperor system, a crucial institution of social stability, nominally at variance with the professed democratic values of America. As the strike wave was growing, in January 1946 General Douglas MacArthur, supreme commander of the occupation, wrote to Dwight Eisenhower (U.S. Army Chief of Staff) that Japan would collapse if the emperor were removed. At the same time, the occupation aimed to prevent the re-emergence of a challenge to U.S. power in the Pacific; hence the Constitution stipulates that Japan "will never" maintain "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential" (Article 9).

On the heels of the outbreak of strikes in September 1945 and with the aim of establishing stable worker-management relations, the occupation mandated new union rights for Japanese workers. The American overlords also voided the repressive laws that had illegalized Communists since 1925 and let the surviving leftist prisoners out of Japanese hellhole jails. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) immediately began to play a prominent role in the labor struggles.

But the JCP used its authority to betray the strike wave in the name of supporting bourgeois "democracy." In line with its position that Japan was some kind of semi-feudal society, it hailed the occupation for moving against "feudalistic elements" and painted it as playing a progressive role. This was a continuation of the JCP's line of supporting the Allies in the war. Of course, the occupation soon shifted course: soon after the JCP's betrayal of the 1947 general strike, a campaign was unleashed against leftists and workers' leaders, with tens of thousands of militants fired between 1949 and 1951. The 1948 ban on strikes by government workers, who had been in the forefront of labor militancy, was an important step.

Nippon News

March 2015: Yoshiaki Harada, Liberal Democratic Party member of Japanese House of Representatives, presses Japan's claim to Diaoyu/ Senkaku Islands as part of counterrevolutionary drive against Chinese deformed workers state.

The repression escalated after the Chinese Revolution, and during the Korean War the JCP was proscribed and its leadership forced to go underground. Through this repression, and together with the willing collaboration of the Socialist Party to undermine Communist influence in the unions, the wave of labor militancy was defeated. After criticism from Moscow, in 1950 the JCP retrospectively disavowed its support for the U.S. occupation, but political support for bourgeois forces in the name of "democracy" remains the JCP's program (as it remains that of other social-democratic reformists in Japan and worldwide).

Today the JCP works overtime to push the widespread view that the Constitution can prevent imperialist war and that a people's movement can bring about a peaceful Japan. These illusions are suicidal for the working class. Imperialism and militarism are inherent in the capitalist system; to put an end to imperialist war, a series of workers revolutions is necessary, which will rip the means of production out of the hands of the capitalists and establish an international planned economy.

After the 1949 Chinese Revolution, American policy toward Japan took a U-turn. Formerly seen mostly as a rival for economic domination of the Pacific region, Japan became the key ally in the U.S. crusade to stop the "Communist menace" in Asia. Thus, based on a directive by the U.S. occupiers, the Japanese government established the forerunner of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in 1950 during the Korean War. Imperialist rivalry, which can never truly be eliminated, was subordinated to unity against China and the USSR and against the threat of further anti-capitalist upheavals, such as would indeed break out in Korea and Vietnam. The postwar economic recovery really took off when Japan became the quartermasters for the U.S. forces in the Korean War. On the political level, anti-Communist cooperation remains the dominating factor in U.S./ Japan relations up to today.

For Class Struggle Against the Bourgeoisie!

A few days before the government pushed through the NSL, it passed in parliament an important economic attack on the working class: legislation to further extend temporary work. These laws eliminate any time limit for a company employing a temp worker for a specific job (there had been a limit of three years). They favor the increasing use of temporary workers instead of full-time employees with benefits, greater job security and union rights. While there were small protests and clear anger among workers, the bureaucrats at the head of the trade unions, devoted to the lie of a shared "national interest" of workers and bosses, did not mount any serious opposition to these laws.

At the same time, the demonstrations against the new war laws have brought out workers, with union banners present at many protests. Anti-NSL sentiment has been shown in some strategic industries such as shipbuilding and steel. Some unions affiliated to Rengo, the largest union federation, have issued protest declarations, while a number of unions affiliated to the JCP-led Zenroren federation formally voted to empower their leaderships to declare a political strike in opposition to the laws.

The Zenroren-affiliated health workers union, which has about 170,000 members, motivated its opposition by noting that if a war breaks out its members would immediately be directly involved. The Zenroren-affiliated metal workers union JMIU (about 9,000 members) voted to authorize calling a strike and held meetings in workplaces around the country, where non-organized workers also joined their assemblies. It is clear that the pressure from the base must have been very strong; the JCP's newspaper *Akahata* quotes a worker: "We were waiting for the union to propose some action." However, the class-collaborationist bureaucracies of all three trade-union federations (in addition to the above mentioned two there is also Zenrokyo, associated with the Social Democratic Party) are dead set

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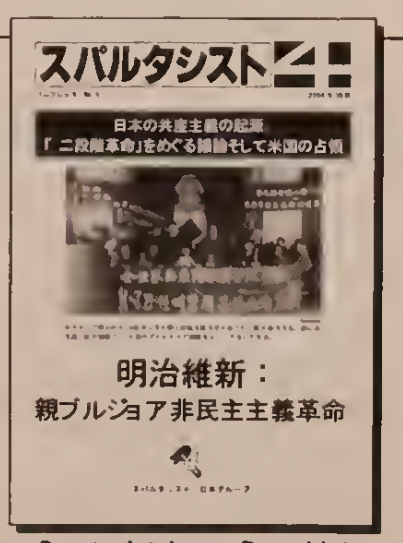

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Japan...

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against really mobilizing the power of the working class. Thus the leadership of the JMIU on September 9 declared a token "strike" for half an hour in one company, involving a couple of dozen workers. This action demanded: stop the war laws and the law on temporary jobs.

The reformist leaderships at the top of the unions must he defeated politically; revolutionaries must fight in the unions for a new leadership on a program of class struggle and political opposition to the capitalist rulers. The sentiment against the NSL needs to be turned toward mobilizing the working class in class struggle against the capitalist class and their war machine. A small but powerful example was the workers action that occurred in 2001 in the port of Sasebo when ahout 200 dockworkers organized in Zenkowan (All Japan Dockworkers Union) refused to load war matériel for the Japanese navy heading to support the U.S. imperialists in their war in Afghanistan. Such actions of international solidarity point toward an understanding of the power of the working class to destroy the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

There is a section of bourgeois opinion that opposes the aggressive militaristic anti-China course of the current government from the standpoint that it endangers Japanese business interests in China. This tendency is represented in the main by the Democratic Party but also includes such figures as Uichiro Niwa (ex-boss of the trading giant Itochu and former ambassador to China) and LDP former honcho Makoto Koga. While at present they have little direct influence on government policy, this could change. In fact, the Democratic Party is no less militaristic than the LDP, but it prefers to maintain the fiction of a "defensive" military and fears becoming drawn into far-flung military conflicts by the U.S. Thus the Democratic Party together with the right-wing bourgeois "Japan Restoration Party" had introduced militarization bills into the last parliamentary session, seeking to strengthen the collaboration of the SDF and coast guard in waters surrounding Japan, targeting China.

Ishikawa Koyo

Army Signal Corps

Left: Charred remains of some of the 100,000 civilians killed in U.S. firebombing of Tokyo on night of 9-10 March 1945. Right: Japanese foreign minister signs surrender aboard USS *Missouri*, September 1945.

Some elements on the right of the bourgeois spectrum are criticizing Abe for *not* seeking open revision of the Constitution. They are represented by such academics as Keio University professor Kobayashi Setsu, who is concerned that Abe's method is causing "instability in law"—i.e., that any government might be able to change the "interpretation" according to its whim (as Abe has done). The JCP was explicit in seeking to bloc not only with the Democratic Party but even with openly pro-militarist academics based on common opposition to Ahe changing the Constitution. The day the government passed the new laws, the JCP leadership issued a call for a new "People's coalition government" with the sole aim of rescinding them. This includes an offer of electoral collaboration.

The SEALDs are also aggressively pushing for an "alliance of opposition parties." Thus, they held a meeting on November 19 with the heads of five opposition parties including the Democratic Party, the JCP and a hardcore neoliberal party. In Marxist terms, this is a popular front—a bloc containing both reformist working-class groups and bourgeois political formations, which aims to take over the reins of a capitalist government. Naturally the bourgeois elements will ensure that the program of any such class-collaborationist formation will be a capitalist program.

In pursuit of this appetite, the JCP assures the bourgeoisie that if it were ever allowed to participate in government, it would fully support Japanese imperialism. Thus JCP leader Kazuo Shii, in a major interview in the bourgeois daily *Nikkei Shimbun* (October 3), pledged *not* to make any moves against the U.S.-Japan military alliance (although abrogation of that treaty is in the JCP's program). Shii also pledged: "We will co-exist with the Emperor system. There is no need to worry." The JCP has missed no opportunity to repeat how they don't want "our" SDF forces in "harm's way"; i.e., the SDF should only "defend" Japan and "not get involved in the U.S.'s wars." In this vein, JCP head Shii gave a major press conference at a critical time of the protests in June, stressing that "Even if the JCP takes over the reins of government, we will maintain the SDF."

The Chukaku group postures to the left of the JCP and has been running polemics against the JCP's social-patriotic declarations (*Zenshin*, 6 July). Chukaku attacks the JCP position that the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands are "Japanese territory," correctly noting that this places the JCP on the same plane as Abe in using the supposed "Chinese threat" as justification for further militarization. However, to point to these facts without taking a position in defense of the Chinese workers state is a capitulation to Japanese imperialism.

Chukaku also puts forward the position that the Constitution, which enshrines capitalist private property and the reactionary emperor system, is not bourgeois. It says the Japanese constitution as represented by Article 9 "was a by-product of revolution, forced on the ruling class in exchange for the defeat of the post-war revolution." Chukaku claims that the purpose of the constitutional revision that the LDP has sought for decades is "to establish the absolute rule by capital"—as though the present system had any other class character! Their occasional use of "revolutionary" rhetoric is a veneer to obscure their real program, which is merely to fight for defense of the Constitution, which is also the central concern of the JCP.

In political struggle against reformism, what is needed is a revolutionary workers party. Such a party would fight to win the working class and youthful protesters to the understanding that to defeat militarism and break the power of imperialism there is no road short of workers revolution which will expropriate the capitalists as a class and establish a workers state as part of the construction of an internationally planned economy. This program of international revolution animated the Russian Revolution of October 1917 and the early Communist International under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. This is our tradition and the program we stand on today. ***Reforge the Fourth International!*** ■

Massacre...

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class. Indeed, during the 2002 ILWU West Coast longshore contract battle, the head of Homeland Security warned the union that a strike could "threaten national security," and the Bush administration threatened to send the military to operate the ports.

The same capitalist rulers who are perpetrating the "war on terror" are also gutting wages, benefits and jobs for working people. They know they sit on a mountain of social discontent. When it explodes in social and class struggle, the rulers will use their "anti-terror" laws to try to suppress the workers and the oppressed. It is vital for working people to defend Muslims and oppose every attempt by the ruling class to augment the repressive power of the capitalist state.

The San Bernardino killings were a godsend to the ruling class. Dropped from the front pages were the cop killings of unarmed black people and the murderous attacks on abortion providers. While the Republicans have escalated their howls of anti-Muslim bigotry, the Democrats are exploiting the massacre to push for more gun control. For the first time in 95 years, the *New York Times* (5 December) ran an editorial on its front page, "The Gun Epidemic." Leading the pack is the Obama White House, with Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders likewise calling for stronger hackground checks on gun huyers. They are whipping up an orchestrated panic over guns, this time with the added spectre of Muslims with guns. In his Decemher 6 Oval Office address, where he reiterated that the U.S. is "at war with terrorists," Obama called gun control "a matter of national security."

The right to hear arms must be defended. The intent of gun control legislation is to disarm the population and to enforce a monopoly of violence in the hands of the capitalist state. Gun control kills, and it kills hlack people in particular. The earliest 20th-century gun control laws were passed in states like South Carolina, Tennessee and Mississippi as a way to disarm hlacks in the face of KKK terror. In the 1960s, gun control laws were passed in New York and California to target Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. While Ohama and the *Times* editors portray those standing up for Second Amendment rights as the racist, anti-immigrant, right-wing fringe, the basic truth of the matter is something that used to be common wisdom among labor and black militants: if guns are outlawed, only cops, criminals and fascists will have them. Had the San Bernardino health department workers been packing, a few more may have survived.

The American capitalist state has a long history of mass murder. In 1914, the Colorado state militia massacred 21 men, women and children, families of striking miners in Ludlow. In 1921, police in Tulsa bombed the segregated black community, killing 75 people. During the 1937 Republic Steel strike, Chicago cops shot to death ten strikers and their supporters and injured at least 60 on Memorial Day; newsreel film of the bloodbath was suppressed. In the Los Angeles area of Watts, cops unleashed a massive wave of repression against black people during the 1965 upheaval in which 34 people died. In 1993, after a 51-day siege, Bill Clinton's Justice Department ordered an attack on the integrated Branch Davidian religious sect near Waco, Texas, killing over 80 men, women and children. This year alone, police have killed well over 1,000 people.

Whether or not the San Bernardino killers are connected to ISIS, the bitter truth is that the U.S. imperialists are the greatest terrorists in the world. From the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the carpet bomhing of Vietnam to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and drone strikes on innocent civilians in Africa and the Near East—the imperialists' hands drip with the blood of tens of millions. In fact, ISIS is descended from the CIA-hacked jihadists who fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. As we have repeatedly emphasized, any hlows struck against the imperialist forces or their proxies in the Near East—including by such reactionary elements as ISIS—would serve the interests of the international working class. ***U.S. out of the Near East!***

What is needed is class struggle hy workers in the U.S. against their capitalist rulers at home. As Marxists in the belly of the imperialist beast, we seek to instill in the proletariat the understanding that it has the social power and historic interest to destroy capitalist-imperialist rule from within through socialist revolution. To realize this task requires forging a revolutionary workers party, U.S. section of a reforged Fourth International committed to the struggle for workers rule over the entire planet ■

Smoking Ban...

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workers, splitting the ranks of the proletariat, the only social force with the power to overturn the hosses' rule through socialist revolution.

The inhabitants of public housing are not without resource. Many have relatives who are in the large and often heavily hlack public unions that run this country's major cities (some are even union members themselves). These unions could spearhead a mohilization of labor power to end the jail-like conditions imposed on public housing residents. But the misleaders of America's unions, rather than mohilizing class struggle to defend their members against layoffs and cuts to wages and henefits, have heen complicit in the hosses' drive to slash hndgets and hoost profits. We need a new class-struggle leadership committed to a working-class fight hack against the capitalists' all-sided class war against working people, the poor and oppressed.

To provide for even the elemental needs of all will take the revolutionary overturn of capitalist property relations, which requires the building of a party committed to socialist revolution and centered on working-class militants devoted to that purpose. The proletarian government that will arise on the ashes of this decaying capitalist system would quickly develop low-cost, integrated quality housing with the hest schools and cultural institutions to provide for the education and well-heing of all. Workers rule in the U.S. and internationally—hased on a centrally planned, collectivized economy—will provide the building hlocks for socialist society, the banner of which will be "From each according to his ahility, to each according to his needs." ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

2015 SUBJECT INDEX

Issues No. 1059 (9 January) through No. 1080 (11 December)

GUIDE TO THE SUBJECT INDEX

- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 2015, from issue No. 1059 (9 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 1080 (11 December). During this time, *WV* was published biweekly except for three alternate issues in June, July and August and skipping the last issue in December.
- The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows. Corrections to articles from previous years indicate the issue number and date of the corrected article in brackets.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus:

  Dirty Deeds Down Under, #1061, 6 Feb. (4, 5)

  means the headline of the article, issue No. 1061, dated 6 February, beginning on page 4 and continuing on page 5.
- No entry is listed twice; refer to cross-references for guidance in locating the subject head for particular articles. Cross-references are of two types: those following the word "see" deal centrally with the subject head; those following the words "see also" are related articles. Subject heads in cross-references are separated by a semicolon, while subcategories of subject heads are separated by a comma. Thus:

  Oakland—See **Civil Liberties: Cases.** See also **Charleston.**

  means that articles about Oakland can be found by going to the subject head **CIVIL LIBERTIES** and looking under the subcategory **Cases.** Related articles can be found by going to the subject head **CHARLESTON**
- Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
- Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles relating to Israel and the Occupied Territories will be found under the subject head **ISRAEL/PALESTINE**. Articles that deal centrally with U.S. foreign policy will be found under **U.S.: International Relations** or under the relevant geographical heading, for example, **CHINA.**
- Articles under the *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.
- Abbreviations used in entries are:

  C: Correction

  CSDN: *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* article

  E: Editorial Note

  L: Letter

  R: Review

  S: Series

  YSp: *Young Spartacus* article

  W&R: *Women and Revolution* article
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- Lear Auto Contract Sellout—UAW Tops Tout Two-Tier Bait and Switch, #1064, 20 Mar. (3, 4)
- Auto Workers Oppose Sellout Contract, #1075, 2 Oct. (1, 11)
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- Louisiana Museum Shows Horrors of Slavery (L), #1065, 3 Apr. (2)
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- San Francisco 1984—We Tore Down the Flag of Slavery!, #1071, 10 July (6)
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- *The Black Panthers*: Movie Review (by M.J. Clancy) (R), #1076, 16 Oct. (12, 10, 11)
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- The Rise of British Imperialism (*Spartacist Canada*) (S)
  - Part One: The Protestant Reformation to the English Revolution, #1062, 20 Feb. (6, 7, 11)*
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- British Elections: No Choice for Workers, Minorities (*Workers Hammer*), #1067, 1 May (3, 10, 11)
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- British Labour Party Elections: Corbyn Landslide, Blairite Backlash (*Workers Hammer*), #1075, 2 Oct. (12, 10, 11)

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- Marxism and the Fight Against Native Oppression in Canada (*Spartacist Canada*), #1066, 17 Apr. (4, 5, 6, 7, 11)
- Canada's Creeping Police State (*Spartacist Canada*), #1067, 1 May (8, 9)
- Cops Terrorize Black Toronto (*Spartacist Canada*), #1075, 2 Oct. (12, 9)
- British Columbia, Canada: Labor Must Combat Anti-Asian Racism (*Spartacist Canada*), #1076, 16 Oct. (4, 5)
- Canadian Mining in Latin America: Blood, Plunder and Profit (*Spartacist Canada*), #1077, 30 Oct. (8, 9)

• **Quebec**
- Montreal: Campus Feminists Fail to Gag Marxists (*Spartacist Canada*) (YSp), #1062, 20 Feb. (9, 10)
- Montreal May Day Leaflet: Mobilize the Working Class Against Capitalist Austerity! (*Spartacist Canada*), #1071, 10 July (4, 5, 10)

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